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THE
FORESTERS.

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THE
FORESTERS.

A NOVEL.

ALTERED FROM THE FRENCH
BY MISS GUNNING.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE
FORESTERS.

CHAPTER I.

DECLINE OF DAY.

WHAT is that on which depends the happiness, or the distress of man's existence? It is our character—it is dependant too in a great measure on the manner with which we accustom ourselves to discriminate objects:—it is from our sentiments—from our affections only that we derive our felicity. Do we desire to possess it in permanence, let us establish it in purity—Do we afterwards complain that

we are unfortunate, let us first look round, let us compare with our own the lot of other men, and we shall have little reason for selfish lamentations. It is by education alone that we are enabled to develope the mind—to arrange the passions—to fathom their basis. The passions are a noble, but they are also a dangerous endowment; they give to the fire of youth a certain portion of strength, more apt to consume reason than ripen enjoyment: a fire never to be quenched in the heyday of life, hardly in old age to be extinguished. All mankind are more or less subject to the dominion of the passions, and those who know how to regulate, without destroying them, are the class to whom they will be useful; in opulent cities they take their root in luxury, and grow headstrong for want of pruning—they produce a thousand fictitious wants—they occasion a thousand contrarieties—they create insatiable appetites, every one of which subverts nature, and is the declared foe of legitimate happiness.

Observe

Observe a raw youth wrapped up in his own conceit—guided by his own will—with what impetuosity does he escape from the trammels of childhood—with what rashness does he madly run upon the world, tripping or falling at every second step.—See him at the moment when death rids him of a troublesome preceptor, who would teach him what he has no relish for—the lessons of wisdom. Does he weep? Does he mourn for this friend?—No! his parents are gone before: this is the only stumbling block in the way of his pleasures: he rejoices that this last bar is removed—he is sensible alone to what he calls his good fortune: but take care, young man, or the liberty thou so dearly prizest may turn to thy destruction. Let us step with him for an instant into that world so inviting in prospect—so eagerly desired—a million of temptations, one more brilliant than another, are crowding the path through which he is galloping—they put themselves into his reach—they invite him to lay hold of them—his joy is confused—

his choice distracted—and at last, perhaps, he seizes on those by which he is the least captivated, merely because they happen to be the most popular—all is noise—hurry—dissipation. Balls, assemblies, concerts, horse-racing, or gaming, occupy the hours as they fly—at night still more new, more charming projects are formed for the morrow—present joys fade in their colouring, when opposed to the expected future. Our young voluptuary is ever busy in doing nothing, yet wonders he has the powers of doing so much: he has no complaint but the want of time—yet in the progress of time, the very recollection of those delights he is now so eagerly pursuing are quite obliterated from his fleeting memory, whether it be those of lounging at *spectacles*, of deep-play, or illicit love. Love! did I say—ah! why profane a name so hallowed! Where is the affinity between inclination and innocent affection—the voice of one is horrible—for ever clamorous to the senses, but does not proceed from the heart—brutal as insatiable

haps, least en to ry—certs, hours more mor-uring, nature. fy in s the com- n the ion of y pur- fleet- oun- illicit y pro- is the nocent rible—ut does as in- satiable

satiable—satisfied without choice. Such is inclination—virtuous love is a ray of the Divinity, which the Great Father of all mingles in our mental existence to soften our sorrows, to gladden our hearts, and to draw us nearer to himself. But look once more at our poor victim of fashionable errors—see him in the meridian of his career, reduced by disease to the shadow of his former self, the prey of ennué.—Morose, peevish, devoured by the torments of conscience, yet ashamed to repose his feelings even in the bosom of his family. Ah! unfortunate, ill-conducted mortal; what a burden art thou become to society—what a weight to thyself—what a disgrace to humanity!

Such as I have described are the general effects of strong passions in great cities: behold the picture contrasted by the quiet inhabitants of the low-roofed hamlet:—examine the peasants—not such as are to be met with in the environs of Paris:—alas! the contagion of manners has spread beyond the Fauxbourgs;—the harmless people

people I mean to represent are those of Beauce of Béarn. Observe Jacques as he works by the side of his father—his age is only sixteen, yet his athletic limbs would persuade one he had lived over twice that number of years. He follows the plough with the lightness of an elf, nor thinks himself less engaging because his hands grow callous whilst forcing the spade into the bosom of the hardened earth, or that he loses his respectability by employing his stout arms in the usage of the flail—he manfully lays on his strokes on the thrashing floor, rejoicing in the bounty of Nature, who repays his labours with that prolific grain, without which man would find it difficult, if not impossible, to subsist. The burden of the day is over—rest succeeds to labour—he is more than satisfied with the provision laid up in his barns—the poppy operates on his eyelids, its influence is never impeded, except some soft retrospection creeps over his mind, and by the sweetest train of recollections protract his slumbers.

Whatever

Whatever be his pleasures they are innocent—he recalls the passed without occasion of shame—he contemplates the future with delight:—perhaps a party at bowls, a wrestle on the green, or a dance in the village, bound his desires—or are these ever indulged but at proper seasons:—the hours of enjoyment succeed to those of employment—it is only when labour abdicates, that pleasure begins her reign. His life is divided into three parts: industry has the largest, amusement the smallest portion; religious exercises fill up the remainder; and Jacques, in his parish church, is still an object worthy of approbation. It is neither by constraint, nor for form sake, that he goes there, but from habitual devotion—he enters with a modest air—he holds up the hat which he carries in his hand to cover his face from observation, as he announces some short scriptural ejaculation, which having performed with due reverence to the presiding deity, he takes his seat by the side of his mother: his arms

are pendent—his hands joined—his mouth perpendicularly open—his eyes fixed on his meek pastor, who is dealing out sublime truths, not in the lofty strains of a declaimer, but the pious, simple language of a true Christian, who instead of strewing the path of his hearers with flowers of rhetoric is marking out their direct road to Heaven by the straight way. Jacques loses not a word of the long discourse—he listens—he retains the whole of it—he does more, he makes it the subject of his meditations from one Sunday to another.

These two portraits being feebly delineated, I expect there are many who will think I speak too severely of the great, too flatteringly of the small. I disclaim all partiality—if I am guilty of error, it is the error of opinion: neither do I conceive that every character we meet with in cities must of necessity be vicious, or that all are virtuous which shelter themselves in retirement: but I hope it will be allowed, that instances of virtue are more rare in the former, because the latter possess

seeks two grand specifics against ennui, work and sleep. With us idleness produces vice—vice is the parent of infirmities—labour sweetens the poor man's repose—it tinges his cheeks with health—it will not let sickness approach, except it creeps upon him in the rear of time—large towns may be considered as vast overgrown colleges, where we learn to misuse our affections, our time, and our passions; the only lessons we readily imbibe teach us that ambition is glory—jealousy, natural—cunning, cleverness. In the country the definition of these words are much better understood—there Nature is the honest school dame, who gives no lectures but those of temperance, virtue, and religion, which her children study with ease, and practise with pleasure.

Where is the man of the world—the free-thinker—the man who depends on chance for all the benefits he does, or all the blessings he hopes to possess? Where is this insensible, infatuated, ungrateful mortal, who refuses to own his dependance on

the bounty of Divine Providence? Can he retain his infidelity, when he beholds the enthusiasm of soul portrayed by the humble peasant as he contemplates in his silent evening walk the wonderful works of an All-Sovereign God. Will the man of education, who calls himself a philosopher, convince us that his wisdom is inferior to the wisdom of a peasant—see him returning from a day of toil to enjoy the sweets of repose—though wearied with labour, see how often he stops to gaze with delight on that horizon which bounds the heart-cheering prospect of vineyards glowing with purple, fields waving with the stalks of plenty; white huts, with smoking chimnies peeping out from the embowering trees of verdant green, sheltered from the visitation of storms, too humble to invite the spoiler's depredating footsteps—see him whilst he considers the charming scene, it is the moment of ecstasy, it is the moment of exultation—but above all, it is the moment of devout gratitude—his eyes are fixed on the marvellous works of his Creator—he lifts

lifts up his heart—his hands are clasped together by irresistible impulse—his heart beats to the impression of thankfulness, and his soul is fully satisfied.

How happy is this peasant seated on the banks of a rivulet bordered with willows, or fringed about by tall majestic trees, forming to his sight the lengthening view of a clear and liquid avenue, either uniting to embrace each other, or bending their venerable branches to kiss the flowing, but unruffled water: its soft murmurs—the cooling breeze—the paddling oars cutting its silvered surface—the distant barking of dogs—the ticktack measures of a neighbouring mill, conspire to captivate his senses, and to fill his mind with religious awe. He watches the going down of the sun—it sets in glorious splendour—it darts its copious rays on the whole face of Nature—he starts from the calm reverie that envelopes him—he thinks of his family, and hastens home to embrace them. They meet him on his way—they have loitered behind to collect the utensils of their

work—the son passes his arm through that of his father—the wife and her children walk before, dragging after them the long straggling branches destined to kindle the blazing fire, which is to dress their frugal supper. Thus they march cheerly along to the sound of the shepherd's bell, as he calls his wandering flock to their nightly fold—the melodious tones of a flute adds sweet musical variety to general harmony : the careful mother makes haste with her rosy brood to prepare for the reception of her husband—his steps are prevented by new objects of admiration.

“ See!” cries he, “ see, Jacques, in the obscurity of this approaching twilight, how glorious to the view is that planet, which sinking in purple gives place to the silver moon, modestly waiting to rise from behind the mountain at the departure of that luminous body, from which her pale light is borrowed.”

His feet are now at the door of his cottage—he enters it with delight—he passes into his little garden, walks round and
round

round its narrow limits—he is elated with possessing ten roods of ground stocked with vegetables; they are in his imagination equal to ten acres that are not his own: he is contented with his lot—he envies no man—he recalls to his mind the charming scene of the evening—is it possible to forget such a combination of Nature's best treasures: he meditates, he enjoys, he determines to revisit them.

Such is the decline of day—remote, far remote from capitals. Ah! how striking the contrast between the silence of the country and the confusion of cities. Let us suppose ourselves half a mile from Paris: what is it that we see—what is it that we hear from our elevated situation? We overlook a huge mass of heavy buildings, but we see them enveloped in smoke, and the sounds we hear are a disagreeable compound, unproductive of harmony. Is there any thing to be found in the noise of carriages—in the trampling of horses—in the rattling of chains—in the loud voices of those who cry their merchandize. What is

is there in all this to create pleasure—to make the decline of day glorious or tranquil? You sigh—you have nothing to approve—nothing to admire—no philosophic reflections present themselves—you regard with insipidity, with apathy, the grandeur of those superb edifices, which are mis-called country houses—you have prolonged your walk—you have passed by many of them—you return to Paris—you are out of spirits, fatigued, melancholy—you do not know why—you only know that you are dissatisfied with your excursion, and that you have no desire to repeat it.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

THE WANDERER.

WILLIAM passed the gates of Valence alone, and on foot; his little baggage under his arm—his eyes swimming in tears—he turns from time to time, examines the spires, the edifices of that pretty capital of Valertinois—at every agonising look his agitations increase—these objects remind him of a beloved friend; perhaps too that friend is perfidious—he sighs—he wrings his hands—he walks on with melancholy steps, and slow—he no longer perceives the summit of the citadel—he loses sight of all but his own misfortunes—of these he could not be divested, they were interwoven with his existence. He is only eighteen: how graceful his figure—how charming

charming his countenance—is it possible he should be unfortunate—listen whilst I tell you his eventful history to the moment on which we find him taking the road from Valence—then determine on the colour of his fate.

William is the only name by which I am able to announce him—he knew of no other—he knew not that of his father—neither had his lovely face ever rested on the bosom of a tender mother: he is also as ignorant what place claims his nativity, as of his name, his parents, or his lineage. At the earliest dawn of reason, in the tender season of helpless infancy, he found himself in the hands of a good old woman, whom instinct taught him to call by the appellation of mother; it was not altogether misapplied—she had given herself a title to his duty, his respect, and his affections, by rearing him with all the assiduous tenderness that belong to the maternal character. She loved his person, but she did not spoil his natural pleasant disposition by weak indulgences, or severe inflictions—he was
bred

bred upon her knee before he was able to walk by her side; she would then inspire him with manly ideas, and from her he received the first rudiments of education.

William, besides Madame Dulays who openly protected him, had another benefactor that secretly administered to his wants; from this unknown friend certain sums were punctually remitted, sufficiently large for procuring him the means of learning from proper masters the elements of dancing and music. "From the latter of these," said his sensible monitress, "you will reap, my dear William, a great deal of pleasure when I have orders to send you to college, where only you can have a proper opportunity to complete your knowledge in this first-rate accomplishment." William was at this time ten years old; he resided with his patroness at Paris *à porte Cochère*, the second *rue de la Chaise*.

Madame Dulays, whose husband had been an officer of cavalry, inherited at the death of her husband two thousand crowns, a small

a small competence, yet enough to support the station she chose to occupy—she cut with the world—she hid herself from all society—company were insupportable—solitude charming—she yielded to the unsocial predilection—she neither went abroad, nor received those who sought to visit her at home—by what chance the little William became a part of her family is yet a mystery: let us hope that time may reveal it.

It was not the decease of her husband—it was not the forlorn state of widowhood that had driven Madame Dulays from the cheerful haunts of men—what made her take up a disrelish for society was, the death of an only, a dearly beloved son, who was killed in a duel by one of his friends, with whom he quarrelled; which unfortunate disaster was still so fresh in the mind of his afflicted mother, that almost before William was able to comprehend the nature of her complaints, she would pass whole hours in speaking to him on the virtues of her poor Dulays, and the treachery

chery of his friend; she even tried to impress his young mind with a bad opinion of mankind in general. She had but this single foible—who then shall presume to hold it unpardonable, though its tendency was pernicious: the child could only listen without understanding—he saw her weep—he wept in sympathy, yet did not know why—he heard her moans—he echoed them back from the very bottom of his heart, equally unempowered to discover the cause of her afflictions as to console her under them; so that it may justly be said, the first lessons he imbibed from his mistaken tutorefs were, that melancholy is full of charms, and that all men are deceitful; in both of which he became tolerably well versed before he was separated from this dear, but dangerous matron.

At ten years old William was informed by Madame Dulays that she was not his mother. He heard the declaration with grief—with surprise—with terror—reflecting by nature, gloomy by example, he received

ceived the unexpected intelligence with less fortitude than sorrow.

“ Ah! if indeed you are not my mother,” said he, “ what have you done with my parents?—where have you concealed them so long?—bring them to me, or carry me to them. Cruel Mama! why do you tell me I am not your son, before you have told me who is the father, who is the mother of your poor little William?”

“ That I cannot tell you, my good child,” she replied, kissing his cheeks, and wiping away the fast-falling tears which bedewed them; “ all I know of your birth is, that the brother of your father was the friend of my husband; he received you to oblige him; I have asked him a thousand times concerning your birth, but if the secret was confided to him, he guarded it with care, and preserved it inviolable.”

William every day after this humiliating eclaircissement grew more and more thoughtful; he reflected on the words which in former conversations had been more than once repeated by Madame

Dulays

Dulays—*when I shall be ordered to send you to college.*

“Ah!” said he, “this must certainly be my father—who is there besides that can have a right to dispose of me as he pleases.”

He eagerly ran to find his benefactress, to whom he communicated his suspicions, but she was unable to solve or strengthen them: all she could do was to assure him that she had never seen the person who supplied her with money to defray the expences of his board, clothes, and education: it always came to her by so particular a mode of conveyance, as left her no opening to gratify her curiosity; though, for his sake more than her own, she was well inclined to get at the bottom of a transaction so extraordinary.

“You see, my child,” added the old woman, in her usual tone of distrust, “what it is to be forced to live in a world inhabited by men, who make it their business to deceive us—to impose on our senses—Ah! William, William, what bitterness shall I feel

I feel for thee, when thou launchest upon this ocean of perfidy! Heaven grant the fate of my poor Dulays may not fall upon thee! it was a friend that pierced his precious bosom—think of him, and as long as you live suspect every man that offers you his friendship.”

William knew Madame Dulays had so much kindness for him, that unfortunately every word she uttered found its way to his heart, and at fourteen he was a perfect little misanthrope; yet nevertheless he ardently longed to be pressed in the arms of his father. “I am chilled with horror,” would he say, “and miserable for ever—this mystery of birth robs me of my only Mama—it gives me no parent to supply her place.” Such were his cogitations—such his murmuring in the solitude of Madame Dulays, who never suffered him to go out, except to mass, either in the chapel of the *Petites Maisons*, or to the church of St. Sulpice, and then only in a coach, for the admittance of which the gates were always opened; such care had the old lady

taken

upon taken that her infant pupil should not be
t the seen by strangers, concealing him as effec-
upon tually from all eyes as if he had been kept
pre- locked up in a box.

long So much premeditated caution gave a
offers new alarm to the foreboding mind of the
too-anxious William, in proportion as his
ad so reasoning faculties daily expanded: he fan-
nately cied from appearance, which till now had
ay to never engaged his attention, that traps
perfect were every where set to ensnare him; that
he ar- into some of them he should certainly stum-
rms of ble, notwithstanding the prudent precau-
error," tion of his friend to save him; and those
ever— erroneous fears rendered him the most
y only timid, as he before thought himself the
supply most miserable of children.

ions— The day on which his fourteenth year
of Ma- was completed Madame Dulays sent for
him to him to her chamber: he found her in a
chapel position of more than usual sadness; the
urch of neck he had so often clasped with duteous
ch, for fondness seemed to have lost its strength,
ere al- and to bend in despair over her clasped
d lady hands which rested on a table. Those
taken cheeks

cheeks his infant lips had so often covered with kisses, were now deluged in tears; and the bosom on which his early cries were hushed, heaved with sighs. In these terrible symptoms William prejudged some frightful disaster that threatened himself—pale and trembling he fell on his knees: he hid his face in her robe, and respectfully urged her to tell him with what sort of danger he was threatened.

“With the greatest that can be,” she replied. “Ah! dear child! thou art going to be cast upon the wicked world—yes, thou must go to college—the time is come: alas! we must separate—we must part—alas! dear William! perhaps for ever.”

“God forbid! God forbid!” exclaimed William, pressing her shrivelled hands to his lips, and weeping over them; “if they force me from you I will return often to see you—I will never disgrace the precepts of virtue you have taught me—I will hate the world—I will hate every body in it, except I am so fortunate to find my father and my mother; them I will love with the same

same affection as I love you my dear, my only Mama, so do not cry any more, for when I am a man you shall live with me, or I will come back and live with you."—The old woman embraced him with rapture.

"I am a fool," said she, "to let you see how much I am afflicted, because I break your heart without easing my own. Well, well, you will be a good boy—I know you will—therefore let us try to forget our vexation. If it please Heaven, all that grieves me now may be for the best: who knows but in time it may be your fate to fill out some high sphere, where you would find yourself very deficient, with no better education than I can procure for you. Yes, it is quite right that you should go to this dreaded college, where, if you attach yourself to study, and avoid bad examples, you may learn a great deal, and do yourself no harm."

"But who is it that separates me from you?" said William, "by what authority—for what purpose—tell me all that

you know, my dear Mama, and I shall accede with the better grace to my destiny."

"My amiable child!" replied Madame Dulays, who by this time was restored to composure, "it is the unknown gentleman to whom you are already very much indebted, who signifies by a mighty respectable person, calling himself Dumount, that his commands are, you should on this very day remove with him to college. Monsieur Dumount comes to fetch you away—it was his presence, or rather the errand that brought him hither, which flung me into the condition you found me exposed to—it is therefore our duty to submit: but in the new abode to which you are going, always remember the lessons of prudence—of caution—and of temperance you have so aptly imbibed: above all, I charge you form no friendly ties with your comrades; my poor Dulays fell by the hand of a college friend. Think of that, and conduct yourself with more wisdom than he did." Her tears at the mention of

her

her son began to flow afresh, but the current of them was soon stopped by the majestic figure of an ecclesiastic, who with a sober pace, and grave air, presented himself before them.

It was the Abbé Dumount. His person was tall, well made, and erect, though age had turned the colour of his hair to a silver gray—his countenance pale, his eyes penetrating, and full of brightness—his smile sweet, complacent, but tinged with reserve—the cast of his features indicated probity, candour, and frankness; characters which very much relieved the fears of William at the stranger's entrance, and inspired him not only with courage, but even with something like a first-sight affection.

"Behold," said Madame Dulays, presenting her pupil to the Abbé; "behold, Monsieur, my poor little friend, whom I cannot feel pleasure in resigning, even to you, though I well know how much the exchange will be to his advantage."

"Your regret, Madame, is extremely natural," replied Dumount; then presenting his hand to William, who received it with a good grace, he added, "I do not promise to love you better than Madame Dulays, but I will try to love you as well; and if my black dress does not throw a little restraint over your good will towards me, I shall soon be more the confidant of your thoughts, than the preceptor of your conduct."

"And will you indeed, Sir," cried William, with a degree of vivacity unusual to him, "will you have the goodness to be yourself my preceptor. Ah! Mama, if I am only to learn of this gentleman, I shall be less unhappy when I leave you than I should be with any body else in the world."

The Abbé was sensibly affected by a preference not less flattering for the dress of simplicity in which it was offered.

"Yes," replied he, stretching out his arms, and tenderly pressing him between them,

them, "yes, my dear boy, I will be your tutor—I will be your friend—I will be your father, till he to whom you belong shall think proper to reveal himself."

William sobbed out his thanks.

"God be praised," cried the old woman, "that you are so tender hearted, Monsieur, you see how susceptible are the affections of this charming child—you see how he grieves at leaving me."

"He is in the right, Madame," kindly replied the Abbé, "where gratitude does not spring up at an early season in the human mind, the soil would be most unpromising; I should be far from desirous of undertaking to cultivate what Nature has left so barren: but you must visit us—you must come often to see us—we shall receive you as the reward of our diligent application in the pursuit of our studies—at present it is convenient that we should separate: I intreat your adieus may be short, to protract them is the worse policy in the world." Saying this he led his pupil to the embrace of Madame Dulays; he threw

himself into her arms, she pressed him to her bosom; both were dissolved in tears, but neither of them uttered a word: at last they separated in silence—it was a silence full of tender expression, and did not offend the Abbé.

Having entered a carriage which waited for them at the gate, William observed a servant he had never seen before, who stood at the side of it, opened the door, busied himself in placing his baggage on the outside; and after all this was done mounted behind it. Monsieur Dumont plainly saw that it was only the modesty of his pupil which prevented him from asking questions concerning this man, who seemed to engage a good deal of his attention, and willing to amuse him by satisfying his curiosity, informed him, the servant who attended them would always continue in his service, if he should approve of him on a longer trial, being hired to live with, and wait upon them in the college to which they were going. William felt a touch of momentary vanity at this first step towards

his

his increasing consequence: the coachman drove rapidly through the *rue de la Chaise*, and soon brought them to the *Montagne Ste Geneviève*, where they alighted at the great gate belonging to the college of *Navarre*. Monsieur Dumont taking his pupil by the hand, entered with him through a grated door, which was suddenly shut upon them. William trembled—his heart palpitated—his knees could scarcely support him at appearances so tremendous, but the good Abbé squeezing his hand, and bidding him fear nothing, he revived a little; yet before he had proceeded very far all his terrors returned with even greater force than at their first attack; he was taken so extremely ill from the mere agitation of his spirits, that Monsieur Dumont, assisted by servants, were forced to carry him between them into the apartment of the principal, where he strove with his disorder, of which he felt ashamed, but found his situation not at all mended by being in the presence of a master, whose long black robes, austere features, and

crabbed countenance, were enough to have intimidated a more robust youth than himself. In a puritanical, whining tone, the ghostly pettant observed, that thus it was with all children. "When first they come here," said he, "they dislike the idea of work, because they have been spoiled by their parents at home, but when accustomed to study, they soon get rid of their lazy habits, and commence men." Then looking with something which he meant should resemble kindness towards the meek and interesting William, he asked him "if he was any thing better;" adding, "I assure you, my little friend, it is nothing; believe me it is nothing: to-day you shall make me your bows—that boy is extremely pretty—do you hear, child—do you not admire my goodness?—I say to-day I expect no task from you—but to-morrow mind you are to work—yes, you must be diligent to-morrow—will you not, my little man, be very diligent to-morrow—diligence is a mighty blessing; I assure my good

good child, it is a very mighty blessing indeed."

"Ah!" thought William, as he listened to this college wisdom, which struck hard on the boundaries of nonsense; "ah! I am brought here as a lamb to the slaughter; what would become of me, but for the good Mr. Dumont? how unlike is he in all respects to this babbler, who looks cruel even whilst he is speaking kindly. He soon saw these two gentlemen who occupied his reflections go out together; three Abbés remained behind; their figures were far from prepossessing, and the many cross questions they put to William very much disconcerted him—he thought of his good old woman, hastily wishing himself again restored to her protection: whilst under examination his answers were so short, so confused, that rising to retire at a small distance where they might speak apart, he heard one of them say to the other, "That child is a fool; look at the air of folly that envelopes him."—"You are mistaken," he replied, "the boy is no

fool; that you take for folly is only timidity."—"Heaven defend me from *such* timidity!" returned the first speaker; "I fear we shall have much trouble in teaching so stupid a blockhead—no, no, we shall never bring him about."

Here they were interrupted; Monsieur Dumont returned with the principal, who conducted William and his private preceptor to an apartment commodious enough, which he told them was to be theirs: as he went out he tapped the affrighted boy on his cheek, bidding him be very good, very wise, and to think nothing about it—a favourite expression with the pedagogue on all occasions. William saw him depart with what might have been called pleasure, had it not proceeded from the source of melancholy, for when no longer restrained by the awful presence of his master, he gave way, without control, to the grief that oppressed him, which his ministering angel of peace, the good Dumont, endeavoured to mitigate; he heard him with gratitude, but he heard him also with

wish despair: such were the first effects of petticoat government—he could think of nothing but his old woman, by whose indulgences he was not the better fitted for school discipline. When dinner was set before him he could eat nothing, but remained the whole day overwhelmed in sorrow.

The next morning he did not feel less uncomfortable; when Monsieur Dumont, with a great deal of form, put him under the care of the masters appointed to give him his lessons, he hardly understood what they said to him; however, he shewed no reluctance to do as they ordered him—in the afternoon Madame Dulays came to visit him; she heard his complaints with that false tenderness, which increased, rather than silenced them. His sensible friend the Abbé calling her aside, gently reprehended her improper method of consoling his pupil; she confessed herself to have done wrong, and before she took leave of William she exhorted him to take courage; begging him, with tears in her

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eyes,

eyes, to adopt that firmness of mind so necessary to make his new mode of life easy to him. These few words made a greater impression on his dissatisfied mind, than all that had been said to him since he entered the college, and after she was gone he went quietly to his studies; from this time he also began to recover his very small stock of cheerfulness, which had entirely deserted him on being placed in the hands of strange people.

Monsieur Dumount, though the best of all possible beings, and gentle as mercy to his infant charge, was notwithstanding the worst companion that could have been given him, because he did not love the world, or human society, one bit better than his pupil: alas! their characters, their sentiments, too well accorded, so that we must not expect to see William the less a misanthrope for the instructions of his otherwise faultless tutor.

These two friends lived together in cordial habits of love and esteem for many months, and Madame Dulays repeated her visits,

visits, nor was denied admittance, as after the first she took care that her culpable softness should no more offend: on the contrary, she assisted to the increase of his application. William sincerely loved, but William greatly feared the Abbé Dumont; he longed to ask him about his father, but many months were elapsed before he could summon resolution enough to ask him a single question on the subject; at last he took courage, he said to him, "My dear Sir, I dare say it is in your power to give me a great deal of happiness, if you are inclined to do it."

"Speak on my child, and do not fear my inclination—what is it you would have of me?"

"I long to know my birth—I think, I believe, I am pretty sure that you can tell me who is my father."

"William, I do not know your father, I am as ignorant of him as you are."

"Ah! Sir, but how then did you happen to hear of the poor deserted boy, to whom

whom you are so good, so kind." He wept as he spoke.

"Dear child, do not weep—I will tell you every thing that I do know. I had often," continued he, "met at the house of a lady, who is an acquaintance of mine, a well-looking man, of middle age; he appeared to take a warm interest in whatever concerned me; my friend received him on the business of another, and did not even know his name; he one day asked me if I would undertake to assist in the education of a young person, the son of his friend; I agreed to his proposal with pleasure, for I love to cultivate the human mind before it is adulterated by the vices of the world—this gentleman then named to me the college of Navarre, as that fixed upon for the pursuit of your studies; he informed me where I should find you, on what day I should take you from Madame Dulays; he also gave me a purse of twenty-five louis, telling me he would take on himself to be answerable for our pension.

"Well,

"Well, but my dear master," cried William, eagerly interrupting him, "is it not possible, do you think, that this bountiful stranger should be my very father himself?"

"Indeed, my poor child, your question is very natural; nor do I by any means think it improbable, that your innocent conjecture should be founded in fact; you put me in mind too that your features bear a very strong resemblance to his—I shall make it my business to see this lady again; perhaps by this time she might be able to inform me of his name and quality." Dumont was as good as his word; but as ill luck would have it, she had that same day set out for a long journey, nor could any of her people tell when she might return again to Paris. He called frequently at her door for several months, but as no intelligence had been received from her, he gave up the pursuit, and thought no more about it.

William in the mean time grew in stature, as well as in wisdom. Nothing could

could be more enchanting than his figure, nothing more amiable than his countenance, nothing more gentle than his manners; his application was great, and his progress astonishing: yet imaginary evils nestled in the very midst of his virtues, overclouding them with green and yellow melancholy, which at the end of two years acquired fresh force from the sudden death of his first and best beloved friend Madame Dulays. Those who on William's arrival at college had supposed he would do them no credit from his want of abilities, now that they found him eclipse all competitors, treated him with the profoundest respect: in short, he was adored by the whole community; the applauses which he did not seek he modestly received, taking far less pleasure in them than he felt in the unre-served confidence of Monsieur Dumount; not content merely with his conversation, he would keep himself waking some hours every night to recal the subject, and impress it on his memory. And why?—because the Abbé Dumount's mind was tinctured

tured with sadness like his own—he had been deceived—he had been disappointed, and his lessons might have been highly salutary to any other pupil, with less sombre dispositions than those by which William was influenced, even from his cradle.

“In society,” would he say, “there are none better than others; in the world every man is deceived, or a deceiver, which renders them alike mistaken: if you would gain an ascendancy over the mind of man, you must flatter him for virtues he does not possess—you must praise him for what he is not—one who is well born, and rich, cannot be flattered on the score of his birth, or his wealth; that would be all lost labour, because no doubt he is sufficiently sensible of his grandeur, or good fortune; but if a libertine, talk to him of his regularity—if a coward, of his honour—if a miser, of his charity—if a sot, of his moderation—these, dear William, are the conductors to the friendship of a great man: yet this is not all, for whilst you flatter him for his virtues, you must
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enter with him into all his vices; does he game, you must play—does he drink till he has lost his senses, you must do the same, to transform yourself into his likeness; otherwise you will be laughed at, called insupportable, of too high sentiments, of too strong prejudices, one who can be neither pleasant nor sociable.”

“Never, never,” exclaimed William, with energy; “never will I render myself this contemptible animal.”

“There is as much danger,” continued the Abbé, “in being the *deceived*, as there is disgrace in being the *deceiver*; we are in a fair way of becoming the former, when we listen to a certain description of men, who say they can do every thing, have seen every thing, and are capable of every thing; if one believes them, it is like taking shelter under the shadow of a tree, without thinking if the heart of it be sound; you open to them your thoughts, they conceal their own—they abuse your confidence—they plunge you into difficulties, from whence you cannot escape, ~~but~~ at the
expence

expenditure of your honour, your purse, or your health: those who would not be the dupes of vanity, vices, or boasting, who will neither creep, cringe, nor accord, must live out of the world; or if forced into against their better judgement, they must have a system made up of truth, regularity, a little complaisance, and a great deal of resolution, without expecting to be the more esteemed for the uprightness of your conduct; they will say of him—Mr. Such-a-one is to be sure a good sort of man, but he has a weak head—no energy—no passions—no any thing that he ought to have—oh! if he was not a *good sort of man*, there would be no bearing with him. Thus does he gain little credit for his probity, or his moderation. Whenever you leave the college to act your part on the stage of the world, you will find it crowded by such sort of players as I have been describing; all of them, from interested motives, will try to cultivate your notice, if you happen to move in a higher sphere than themselves, but should you be placed a little beneath them,

them, you can have nothing to expect from your association with mankind, but abject scorn, or humiliating taunts. I do not speak to you of the treason, the perfidy, the calumnies of those who ravage on society; what interest can any good man have in belonging to it? if we do not fly from its dangers, the consequences are too natural, and by much too obvious to escape your penetration." Every word of this lecture, and of many others of similar tendency, were engraved on the memory of William, hardly to be eradicated.

The solitude so fondly cherished by these unworldly-minded companions, was not threatened by invaders; they had no acquaintance—they never went out, but on holidays, to walk in the country, and then they only trod those paths least frequented by the human species on such occasions: they always carried about them a pocket library on gloomy or moral subjects, to heighten the pleasures of repose when tired with exercise: these books were, Young's Night Thoughts—the Meditations of Her-

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vey amongst the tombs—or the *Zodiagne of Palingéne*; with some others much in the same stile. Sometimes they would wander to the sequestered woods of Belleville, not without often stopping in their way thither to admire the beautiful bosom of Nature, and to adore the God of Nature, by not overlooking the glory of his works, or passing them by in ungrateful silence.

In the woods of Belleville is a rising ground, from whence it was their great delight to watch the sun at its going down, to contrast that scene with the distant view of Paris, which they also commanded; one displayed to their ravished sight through clouds of gold and purple; the other almost concealed from their view by the envelope of a dark heavy atmosphere; whilst between the two extremes the peeping moon would just shew her bashful face, and again hide it under a passing cloud; sometimes playing with her shadow on the trees, and sometimes casting it on the waters. On this favourite spot Dumount gave his most pleasing, as well as instructive

tive lessons on natural philosophy to his attentive pupil—here it was that they read together their favourite authors, and it was here that they would make reflections upon the numberless sins which would be committed in Paris, from the setting of that day's sun to the rising of another—they would sigh for what they could not prevent, then return to the college with a double relish for the innocent simplicity of their own enjoyments.

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CHAP. III.

THE MAN MASQUED.

VINCENT, the servant who attended on William and Dumount, came hastily to inform the latter that a very grand gentleman, alighting from a superb carriage, had inquired for the Abbé Dumount, desiring that he might speak to him alone. The governor and his pupil cast a look at each other; it was a look of anxiety and suspicion; however, he hastened out to meet this strange visitor, whilst William, panting with emotion, held the door half open, and saw them as they passed, with their backs towards him, into an opposite apartment, where they remained shut up together more than an hour, which circumstance did not a little increase the
poor

poor youth's inquietudes, who walking incessantly with rapid steps about his chamber, wondered what could be the meaning of so long an interview; at last Dumount entered it alone, and in a low voice, but with the strongest demonstrations of joy, "William! dear William!" whispered he, "I have been with your father.—I am sure it is your father who sent for me." The young man fell into his arms; he could only cry out, "Is it possible! oh teach, teach me to bear this overwhelming happiness!"

"Compose yourself, my child; I cannot positively aver that it is your father I have been talking with, but from every circumstance I believe it to be him.—It is the same person who placed you under my care, he who has regularly discharged all the demands of college, who from time to time has so amply supplied us with private benefactions."

William squeezed the hand of his governor, but did not interrupt him.

"Yes,"

"Yes," continued he, "this good man, whether he be your father or not, intends to educate you like a prince; he leaves fifty louis with me—he orders that you shall have the best masters in Paris to finish you in drawing, dancing, and music; he is charmed with the representations I have made of you—you are the express image of him—take courage then, my amiable friend, thy father will no doubt soon acknowledge a son who will do him so much honour."

William asked of Dumount if he could not procure for him an interview with the interesting stranger.

"I would," said he, with energy, "I would give worlds to see him, if but for one little moment."

"Your wish is natural," replied his kind preceptor; "it has been my endeavour to anticipate the success of it. I have ventured to entreat the favour of this mysterious visitor."

"Will he grant it—say dear Dumount, will he grant me this felicity?"

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“He hesitated a long time in a state of irresolution—at last, with much reluctance, he consented to see your face, but you are not to see his; he will have it covered with a mask as long as you are in the room, no doubt to hide from your observation the very striking likeness you bear to him.”

“Ah! but he is gone,” cried William, “he may never return again: this blessed opportunity of bathing his feet with my tears may be lost to me for ever.”

“No, child, no,” replied the Abbé, with a softer voice, “he is still in the house—I will go and bring him to you; but wait patiently, restrain your emotions; do nothing rashly.” He went out—the next moment came back with the stranger, whose features were concealed behind a mask, which terminated at the bottom in a curtain of black taffety. What a moment for the amiable William! what a countenance, unveiled by every thing but his blushes, must he have presented before the sight of him he supposed to be his father.

He

He remembered the words of Dumount, as he precipitately rushed forwards, as if to throw himself either into the arms, or at the feet of the masked figure—he drew back—he respectfully saluted him with his body, but his eyes emitted rays, animated by a thousand unutterable sensations: the unknown waved his hand, as a sign for him to be seated.—Vincent placed chairs, and retired.

A short silence ensued, William's whole attention was rivetted on one object—that object stood before him—he saw him unsteady—he saw him tottering, as if unable to support himself—he saw him struggling with the violence of his feelings, yet durst not evince his own. At last the mask sat down and sighed deeply, as he examined the features of the trembling youth.

This mute scene might have been much lengthened if Mr. Dumount, who perceived the distress of both parties, had not thought proper to interrupt their painful, though eloquent silence.

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“ William,”

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"William," cried he, "Monsieur is the benefactor who has the goodness to provide for your wants—to give you the education of a gentleman—if you would merit the continuation of his favours, pursue the road you have taken—be grateful, and be diligent."

"True," said the unknown, "I would have you grateful to the good Abbé Dumont for the kindness he bestows on you—you cannot respect him too much, or love him too well."

William, covered with confusion, hardly knew what to reply in his fettered situation; he might be too diffuse, or he might not say enough; at last he stammered out his assurances of obedience to all the commands of his munificent protector; adding, nothing could shew the interest his parents took in his welfare so much as their having provided him with so worthy a tutor.

"And who has told you," exclaimed the mask, in an angry tone, "who has dared to make you suppose Dumont was chosen

chosen by your parents? and who are your parents?"

"Ah! Monsieur," returned William, ready to die at his sternness, "be not displeased with the liberty of my expression—alas! I do not know my parents—indeed I do not—I am a poor orphan; I have not a friend to give me bread but yourself.—Will you—can you direct me where I might find them?"

"Never," said he, in a softened voice, "never, my dear boy, speak to me on the subject of your parents."

"But——" cried William.

"But what?" hastily replied the other.

"If you should happen to see my father, dear, dear Sir, be not angry with me; but I would ask you to tell him that his little William can no longer exist out of his presence—tell him I look for him in every face I behold—that cries issue from my soul, but no father will hear them—tell him I would rather die at his feet, than live from him in splendid banishment."

"He cannot shew himself to you—it is *not* to be done."

"Then," retorted William, "he must be a very insensible, or a very barbarous man; either Nature does not speak to his heart, or he stifles her voice—if he loved his son, he would overcome all obstacles—you listen to me—you shed tears—oh! that you would let me see your respectable countenance! quit, O quit the unfriendly mask that hides the sensibility it cannot express; for pity's sake do not any longer conceal from me the father I reverence—on my knees I entreat you to let me behold him—I conjure you by your own, if you have still one living, to hear the prayer of my petition—you tremble—well, if he is dear to you, you will not blame me who am endowed with the same sentiments of duty, of affection—alas! can your kind soul resist the pleadings of a wounded mind—you retire from me—oh! my God! I shall be abandoned by *all*—every body will forsake the devoted William."

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In pronouncing these words he fell down on a sofa, nearly without motion, his hands covering his face, which was bathed in tears.

The Abbé Dumount, penetrated by the condition of his pupil, supplicated the unknown to end his torments.

"They are not greater than my own," said the agitated mask, sobbing from the violence of his emotions—then lifting up his hands to Heaven, he exclaimed in an altered voice, "my God! what have I done, by submitting my own will to that of another!—irreparable weakness! I ought never to have seen him—I desired not to see him.—Dear unfortunate child, why did I ever consent to behold thee—why plunge myself into this excruciating predicament."

Again he considered the wretched William with awful, but not ungentle attention—his eyes, that were before closed, opened to meet the glances of him in the mask; in a fury of despair he jumped from his supine posture, a noble firmness took possession

possession of his mind, and he said, in a tone respectful, but determined, "Well, Sir, since you are obstinate in driving me to madness, I know the only part that remains for me to take—I have no parents to whom I am dear—I have no one tie in the whole universe to whom I am accountable—dishonour, misfortune, ignominy itself will pursue me if I fail to do what I am resolved to accomplish. I die—by my death I relieve my family from a burden they consider as intolerable. Adieu! Monsieur; adieu! my dear Dumont; I go from you for ever."

"Beloved, but rash youth," cried the Incognito, "art thou ignorant that thy death would cause also that of thy affectionate father."

"Ah! it is you—it is your very self—I have no other—I will have no other father."

He threw himself into his arms, still exclaiming, "You are my father! the voice of Nature cannot be silenced—you are my respectable father."

"My

"My son! my son! thou hast conquered." With one arm he pressed him to his heart, with the other hand he removed the mask from his face—a face full of noble expression, on which the eyes of William feasted with devouring eagerness; nor were his ears less regaled to hear himself announced the son of such a father. It was now the turn of parental love to revel in triumph over the total defeat of caution; big drops rolled down the cheeks of the unknown—he drew the frantic William closer to his bosom—hung over him in a transport of fondness, who sometimes laughing, sometimes crying, now on his knees, and now hanging on the neck of his father, altogether made out a scene of joyful confusion, so extremely complicated as will not admit of a regular rehearsal: in short, all three of the actors (for Dumont took a sensible part in their ecstasy), seemed electrified by sentiments new and charming, as if hardly able to support an eclatification so unexpected, so full of interest.

As soon as the passions were sufficiently fatigued in the service of Nature, the father of William began to collect his thoughts, and spoke to him in this manner: "My son, I have ever had the strongest reasons to remain unknown to you; these reasons still exist with their force undiminished; it is true that you have wrested from me a secret which I intended should have died with me—you now know that I am your father—give me no cause to regret the confidence I place in you by a future act of disobedience."

"Your happy William will live only to obey the dearest, the kindest of fathers."

"Promise me to observe, even to the very letter of the law, the commands I am going to impose on you."

"I promise every thing you can ask, and when I do not perform the least of your orders, let me no longer call you my tender, my beloved parent."

"First,

"First, then, you are never to ask me any questions concerning your mother; neither be curious to find out my name, or my quality; it is sufficient to keep you innocent of actions unworthy of your birth, to know that you are born a gentleman—were I to tell you more it would cost you your life, as well as the life of your father.

"Secondly, it is my express commands that you never shew the smallest desire to trace my footsteps, or to ask after my fate, either directly or indirectly: the orders must astonish you, yet my destiny forces them from me. I have no treasure so dear to my heart as you are, yet to you I owe all the extreme misery of my existence: alas! unhappy boy!" his eyes flashing fire as he spoke, "it was you who made me commit a crime——" He was proceeding, but stopped, as having already gone too far.—"Well," continued he, "you will remember what I say to you, and I promise to love you all the days of

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my life. Oh! my son, my dear William! think often of thy father; but think also, that by seeking to know more than he is willing to tell thee, thou wilt be the guilty cause of his punishment. I shall see you, I shall write to you, but you will never be made acquainted with my name." Then turning to the Abbé, "Monsieur Dumount," said he, "I expect from you the same secrecy that I exact from my son, the same forbearance, the same caution—you are an honest, a worthy man, I am convinced of your merit: the person, at whose house we made up our acquaintance, has founded your eulogium, and recounted to me your misfortunes—I admit the severity of them, but they are not the *most* severe that have ever been encountered." Again, addressing his son, "Adieu! William, I shall never abandon, but constantly watch over you."

William and Dumount regarded this astonishing man with such profound veneration, that would he have permitted them

to

to interrupt him, neither one nor the other would have found courage to try the experiment, and those feelings, that the agony of his father communicated to the heart of William, might have seemed more intolerable, if the sharpness of them had not been a little blunted by surprise at the many wonders which appeared to be wrapped up in the mystery of his concealment.

The stranger having ended all that he intended to disclose, hastily renewed his caresses; he pressed to his heart the most engaging of sons—he drew a superb watch, enriched with diamonds, from his pocket, and said, giving it into the hands of William, “Take this trifle to remind you of our first interview, and when it strikes ten think of your father—what would you say? How would you tremble, if in future you should know the solution of this enigma.” His eyes were streaming with tears—he tore himself from the embraces of his son, and, with his handkerchief held to his face, he abruptly fled out of the chamber, leaving

ing the youth and his preceptor rooted to the spot on which they stood, neither of them moving nor speaking for the space of twenty minutes.

At length the joy of having found—of being acknowledged by a father, took precedence of all other sensations in the breast of William; with what transports did he fall on the neck of Dumont, and how when their tongues were loosed did they congratulate each other on the wonderful discovery.—Vincent, fortunately, was ignorant of the whole transaction, so that the secret would rest in security, being only in their own keeping.

The exact similitude of countenance William bore to his father first impressed on the idea of Dumont that he was really his own son, the likeness was equally striking to the youth himself; but this was not the only discovery he made, for at the very first sight of his face he recollected to have seen him often at the side of Madame Dulays when she took him with her to church; he remembered also that though
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CHAP. IV.

THE WATCH STRIKES.

HOW precious to William the valuable trinket presented to him by his half-disclosed parent; as having belonged to him, it was inestimable; as being his gift, it was a pledge of the favour with which that parent considered him; on the score of beauty and novelty it had still other claims on his admiration; a thousand times was it examined minutely both by himself and the Abbé, but the latter could not help laughing at the childishness of his pupil, who did little else the whole day, except keeping it in his hand, and making it strike for his amusement: the more they looked at the richness of its ornaments, the more they were confirmed of the dignity and
state

state of its first owner: at length William opened the inside case to observe its movements, and to his great surprise read this inscription engraved on the plate—*the gift of love, 1730*—he shewed it to Dumount, who partook of his astonishment, because it was easily to be seen that much trouble had vainly been taken to entirely erase the words which were so much mutilated, as to eyes older than William's made it difficult to discern them, though the sensible preceptor, after a moment's reflection, revealed some conjectures to his pupil, founded on good reason, and which no doubt have already occurred to our penetrating reader, the disclosure of them is therefore unnecessary.

Dumount was already asleep, but William continued waking, restless, and agitated; he touched the spring of his watch—it struck ten—the tumult of his mind increased with the repetition of every stroke; he recalled the words of his father—think of me when ten strikes. A death-like coldness crept over his heart—an oppression
next

next to suffocation almost stopped respiration; he hid his head in the clothes, and the bed seemed to rock under him: at last he fell into an unquiet doze, which did not serve to tranquillize his disordered imagination. He beheld his father in the vision that presented itself before him, pierced with wounds, and uttering the most piteous groans — he felt himself pressed in the bloody arms of this terrible spectre; the struggles he made awakened him in agonies, nor would he venture to sleep any more for fear the same phantom might return to visit him. Ever ready to imbibe gloomy ideas from the very nature of his education, he did not consider how rationally such dreams were to be accounted for by the extreme hurry of interesting events through which he had passed in the day, but presaged to himself evils of every description, of which this shocking dream was the Heaven-appointed harbinger.

Next morning the Abbé Dumont, from whom he concealed neither his pains nor his pleasures, was informed of what he had

suffered

suffered sleeping and waking, nor did he disguise that his soul anticipated a fable train of misfortunes—superstition was not the error of Dumount; that weakness had originated in the mind of his pupil, from the natural sadness of a sedentary disposition, or from the tales of his good old woman Madame Dulays; he therefore rallied him so effectually on the subject of encouraging unmanly credulity, that if William was not absolutely cured of his fears, his errors at least were very much abated, and he pursued his studies the rest of that day with greater avidity than ever: but, alas! with the silence of the night his apprehensions returned; they were ushered to his pillow by contemplation—he laid down with the ominous watch in his hand—again it strikes ten—and again he is overwhelmed in terrors.

“Merciful God!” cried he softly, and speaking to himself, “what are these emotions that choke me? to what intent am I thus tortured? Ah! Monsieur Dumount is perfectly wrong—too protentious of misery

fery are my unaccountable feelings—yes, I shall be miserable by inheritance—dear mysterious father, you meant more than you signified—your words were terrible, yet the tone in which you uttered them still more alarming. Shall my suspense never be removed—shall I never learn the whole extent of my misfortunes?”

It was already day-light; the last word quivered on his lips, and with a deep sigh he fell asleep in pronouncing it. Worn out by two nights of fatiguing restlessness, he slept so soundly that whatever new vision might have visited his fancy he had no time to give it entertainment—the next morning he arose perfectly refreshed, perfectly tranquil, and for the first time took lessons from the most eminent masters of Paris in dancing, drawing, and music, though in every one of these polite arts he before very much excelled his instructors.

Several months rolled away, and at the end of a long period the father of William entered again without a mask into his son's apartment—this interview was less pathetic,

yet

yet little less interesting than the former; they were entwined in the arms of each other, as if it had been their mutual wish never to separate.

William's eyes sparkled with joy, because he saw those of his father not so full of sorrow as when they last parted; he heard himself called by the most endearing epithets—he felt his hand still pressed between those of his father, as they sat down side by side.

Dumont, afraid of another too deep impression on the tender spirits of his pupil, contrived to turn the attention of both to something less dangerous than contemplating with mute expression the looks of each other; he began by engaging the unknown upon the subject of his son's improvement—he particularly dwelt on the praises of his musical powers, and at last prevailed on him to listen whilst William should give him a specimen of his abilities: he chose for him a difficult piece, in the performance of which he excelled every body; he
excelled

excelled even himself—his father heard him with transports of approbation—he was enchanted—he cried out in the middle of the lesson, “Great God! how like he is to his mother.” William heard the exclamation—his heart vibrated to the sound of mother—his fingers for an instant rested upon the keys of the instrument—he thought of his father’s stern command, that he should never presume to speak of his mother, and they were again in motion.

His father observed the struggling impulse, and gave him credit for the effort by which he had conquered it; he loaded him with caresses, giving into the hand of Dumont fifty other louis; he thanked him for the progress of his son’s education, but desired that in future he might be made to mix with the world. “I would have him,” said he, “begin to enjoy the amusements of it; but at the same time I charge him, on the forfeiture of my love, and the incurrence of my hate, never to open his lips on the secret of his birth.”

William

William promised to obey all his commands, and they separated very well satisfied with each other, though William had endeavoured to detain him longer, by taking out his watch to convince him it was not late: he only replied by shaking his head, and bidding him remember that whenever it struck ten he could never think too much of his affectionate father—
“Ah! what, my tender parent, happens to you at that hour?”

This question rushed from the heart to the lips of William, and he could not suppress it.

“I am working then for my son—alas!—and for—what was I going to say—have I not commanded——what then do you mean?”

William was all contrition for his involuntary offence—he was forgiven—his father renewed his endearments, and promised to return at the end of six months.

In this manner passed the first three years of our hero's residence at College, and the

the mystery continued to wear its own form, with this difference, that at every visit he received from his father there was always something to make it still more inexplicable; the only one circumstance at which he shewed any displeasure was the little zeal William discovered for going outside the walls of his college. I beseech you, he would say to Dumont, initiate my son to the use and enjoyment of society; his disposition is sedentary, his spirits inclined to sadness, unnatural at his age. I would have you divest him of that gloomy reserve which arises from his entire ignorance of the world, and it is only by knowing it better that he will get rid of his prejudices.

On such occasions the good preceptor would promise every thing, but perform nothing; those very solitary habits which his father wished him to lay aside, being held in the highest estimation by himself, who regarded the world and its pleasures as a raging whirlpool, which made him extremely

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extremely loath to conduct the footsteps of his ward to the brink of the precipice that overlooked it, lest his head should grow giddy, and he should not be able to save him from destruction.

CHAP. V.

THE CONJURER.

THERE stood outside the gates of the college a very old man, nearly five score years of age, who notwithstanding every external mark of poverty, for he was covered with rags, still preserved a graceful figure and fine physiognomy. This venerable Recluse was held in high reverence by the young students; they believed him to be a forcerer, and many were the stolen visits they made him, always coming away in astonishment at the wonderful things he had told them, and in whispers establishing his fame for divining passed as well as future events.

The principal, without having much wisdom to spare, had yet enough to shew him

him the impropriety of permitting the stately mendicant to put himself so much in the way of his scholars; he had more than once driven him off by threatening him with all manner of inflictions, if he should dare to return any more—yet the old man always came back to his station, knowing that the ground on which he had taken his stand did not belong to the college, of course was as free for him as another; besides, he never asked charity, therefore no mode could be adopted to punish or to get rid of him.

Ever since William became the possessor of his father's watch, and as often as he considered the mysterious expressions by which the gift was accompanied, he thought very much of the conjurer; he wished to apply for an explanation to a sage of so much reputed knowledge, but whenever he had acquired courage enough to set about it, the fear of offending the Abbé Dumount, who might possibly inform his father, made him relinquish the design, or rather keep it in reserve till the absence of

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his governor should give him a favourable opportunity to indulge his curiosity undiscovered.

For this opportunity the impatient William had waited many a tedious month, but at last it presented itself to him on the Abbé's going out of the college without him, to visit a sick friend, which must necessarily detain him long enough for the execution of his projection. He immediately passed through the gates, took the old man's hand, and without speaking a word led him softly to his chamber; every thing conspired to his wishes; the porter was occupied on other business, and Vincent out of the way, so that he was sure he should meet with no interruption. When they were shut up together William commenced the conversation, by questioning him concerning his age, his country, and his occupation. Having answered to the two former interrogations, the latter seemed to puzzle him a little: at last he replied, that his occupation was of all others the most dangerous, and the least recompensed.

“ I am,”

"I am," said he, "a soldier—and a neglected one—that I have served in the army with honour—that I have fought for my country with courage—let these wounds be the vouchers: upon saying which he displayed eight places in his body scarified by the sword or the ball of an enemy; adding, "What I get for these sacrifices are insult and beggary—know, young gentleman, the little have always less profit than danger; the great, smaller trouble and larger benefits."

William listened to him with pleasure and surprise: "Ah!" said he, "my friend, it is not those who defend the state that require to be enriched for their services—it is such as yourself who deserve to be recorded in its annals, and supported by its bounties."

The brave soldier shook his gray hairs; "Master," replied he, "you do not seem to understand that those who most oppress the state are generally the best provided for—how should you know it? Sense is the

gift of nature, but judgement comes by experience."

"You charm me extremely," said William, "yet I am informed you possess other talents, besides those of reasoning; I would very fain be made to comprehend by what study you acquired the sublime art of divination."

"In the garrisons," returned he, "we have much leisure, which we occupy in such sort of inquiries: one finds these people from all countries, by which means it is no hard matter to pick up instructions, sometimes from one, sometimes from another."

"I am going to ask you a question," said William.

"Good," replied the old man, "say on, my child, and fear nothing."

"Well then, father, thus it is—a person, who is dearer to me than life, said something on giving me this watch, and has repeated the same words many times since; indeed I never see that person without his repeating them."

"What

“What may these words be?”

“Think of me when this watch strikes ten—ah! Monsieur, can you explain to me the meaning of this mysterious command?”

“What is it you would know from my skill?—speak to the point—what is the particular question you would ask me to resolve?”

“If it were possible, respectable old man, I would be told exactly what that person is about as the watch strikes ten.”

“Nothing is more possible—I will give you all the satisfaction you require, but you must place a confidence in my honour; you must trust your watch in my hand.”

William delivered it to him with a good grace—suddenly the supposed forcerer, plunged in reverie, began calculating—after which he sat down at a table, and wrote for about an hour; then rising, he announced, in a solemn prophetic tone that would have made any body laugh less tinctured by superstition than the pupil of Dumount,

“The man who gave you this watch received it himself from the hands of a woman—this same man is every night at ten o’clock confined in a prison, from which he is not released till the morning of the next day.”

William shuddered—the sentence was a terrible one—he might have sunk under it, if a gleam of that bright understanding he possessed in a superlative degree, if one single ray of sense, unimpregnated by error, had not shot across his mind, to enlighten him with the recollection that no dependance was to be placed on the supernatural powers of any created being—as if God would lend his wisdom to aid the folly of fools, or the shadow of it to cover the deceptions of impostors. These were the thoughts of a moment—and again he considered it a mighty odd circumstance, that this old man should be able to tell him the watch was given by a lady to his father, a secret that had long been surmised both by himself and Dumont, and the very same
which

which we have before recommended to the sagacity of our penetrating reader.

Notwithstanding that the credulity of William was a good deal shaken, very much to the repose of his mind, yet he demanded of the fortune-teller by what means he had discovered the person for whom he was interested passed so much of his time in a prison.

“To people of my profession,” said the old man, “every thing is cabalistic—a watch—a portefeuille—a ring—no matter what—each have their signs, which are always the same—these we explain differently, according to certain observations. The watch is the symbol of life—if one o’clock is the moment of birth, it is an unlucky hour—it foretels insensibility, inconstancy, much trouble, and little fortitude. Two o’clock marks the age of six years, devoid of care—full of agility—bending to caprice—haters of none—lovers of themselves, and contented with all.—Three o’clock answers to the age of nine—it has its reflections—its pains—its tears—

its inquietudes, and its full work. I could thus explain to you, one after another, all the hours, and their protentious omens; but I stop at the point of ten, being that wherein you are more immediately concerned.—Ten o'clock is the age of sixty-three—it signifies a proud soul—heaviness of spirit—coldness of judgement—a body of great size stooping with years, oppressed by bonds—writhing in chains—every hour forms a contrast to another—that which opposes ten is six—it is the age of eighteen, just as the bars of infancy are broken down, when the passions are our masters—this hour signifies variety of enjoyments—exquisite pleasures—but of short duration—poisoned by remorse for the passed, embittered by fears for the future.”

William's gravity, thus besieged by such volleys of nonsense, could hardly make any longer a defence against the strong inclination he felt to turn both the philosopher and himself into ridicule; what protected the one was his age—self respect pleaded

pleaded in behalf of the other; he therefore let the old man dream on without shewing any symptom either of mirth or disapprobation. "You now see, Monsieur Student, that by exposing to you my secret, you can with a little trouble define the mystery of the watch as well as myself; divide the hours into three years, every one to end at midnight, which is the time of death—make it the repeater of the moral situation of each epoch of your friend's life, by which easy method you will find out that he is in affliction—that every night at ten o'clock he is under restraint, confined in a prison, and languishing in chains; but as every hour has its opposite in the good and evil of a man's life, so at day-break the person you wish well to is released from his confinement, and thinks no more about it, because he is happy enough for all the day afterwards—can any thing be more clear than the truths I am telling?"

William smiled.

"I am yet willing," continued the conjurer, "to give you further proofs of my skill."

skill." He then proceeded to make some signs—examined his hands, his eyes, and his other features. "Here are very kindly appearances, my son—you will be very great—very rich—very happy—you are to marry a handsome lady—you will love her well—you will love her long—but all this good fortune shall not arrive till you have passed through many sad reverses."

"I accept the terms of your augury with a great deal of pleasure," replied the youth; "if I am ever happy, I will make you happy also."

"You are joking with me, my good master."

"By no means—I respect your age—I pity your poverty—for these I will protect you."

"Ah! Monsieur Student do you allow nothing to my skill?"

"It is the only part of your claims for which I give you no honour."

"Well, but remember, young gentleman, when my predictions are verified,
you

you shall behold the old soldier at your gate."

"With all my heart," said William, giving him money, and sending him away well satisfied; but he blamed himself for having indulged a weak, if not a guilty curiosity.

Notwithstanding our hero was accomplished beyond all example, yet he took no sort of delight in the advantages his acquirements gave him—vanity had none of these charms for him, which it possesses for the generality of mankind; to an anxious soul like his, even the applauses of an admiring world would have been unrelished; but as long as he carefully shunned society he had no opportunities of trying the effects of it by experience—he did not even know of what use his knowledge was to him—he neither frequented concerts nor spectacles; if he played, it was only to chase melancholy reflections from his mind; if he danced, nobody saw him but his master who gave him lessons; and if he sung, his charming voice was only heard by the

Abbé

Abbé Dumount, who would have loved him with equal fondness, whether he had croaked like a raven, or chanted like a nightingale; nor had he much ear to distinguish between them.

The greatest amusement of these retired friends was found in their country walks, which opened to their studious minds a large field for unbounded observation; these little excursions were the grand regale of philosophic inquiries, which to such as like the world better, or nature less than themselves, would not have been so prolific of pleasure and improvement as they were productive of both to our two collegiates.

CHAP. VI.

THE YOUNG MAN IN THE WOOD.

WILLIAM and Dumount having rambled as usual to their favourite woods of Belleville, they had seated themselves on the grass to admire the setting sun, just as the moon was beginning to dispute with it the lighting of the world; they observed the solemnity of the glorious scene before them in awful silence, which nothing interrupted but the gentle rush of a natural cascade, that modestly concealed itself at a distance, till the sound of a human voice, which uttered only deep sighs of distress, awakened them from their reverie.—They started up—they looked every where about them—at last they saw a young man, who hid himself behind a bank—they watched his

his motions—he was charging a pistol with quickness—it was done in an instant—our two timid adventurers at first feared for their own sakes—they expected he would have fallen upon them, but when they heard him send forth an exclamation of horror, and saw him point the pistol to his mouth, they forgot themselves; they thought only how they might preserve him from destruction—he did not see them as they approached towards him, but they, on perceiving he yet suspended the fatal stroke, and that he seemed rather inclined to speak than to fire, stood still to hear what he was going to say.

“Why do I hesitate?” cried he, “I have lost every thing—to die is but to sleep—yes, I embrace thee, Death—I embrace thee with all my heart—it is but a moment’s pain, and all will be forgotten. Yes all—fools only think of consequences—I know what I am—and I am easy as to what I shall be—so come good pistol, and do thy business.” He once more brought it on a level with his mouth—there was no

time

time to be lost—they made themselves observed by calling out, and bidding him desist from his impious purpose.

“Young man,” said Dumont, in a tone of authority, “what is the crime you dare to meditate? I have overheard thy odious opinions, yet I would not only save thy life, prevent thee from rushing into the presence of thy insulted Creator, with all thy sins of infidelity unrepented, but I would also eradicate from thy trembling soul the errors that have mastered, whatever of divine essence may have once informed it.”

Surprised at the sudden appearance of an ecclesiastic, supported by a youth, whose figure resembled that of man before he fell from his original state of innocence, the desperate designer stopped a moment, as if collecting his thoughts, then said—

“How can my opinions concern you, Monsieur, unless you are to be made answerable for them? I hate preaching—leave me, Sir; I have no time to bestow on indifferent matters—my immediate business

finest is to cut the thread of my trouble. some existence—and I will do it—it is impossible it should be otherwise.” Here many tears followed, and he sobbed vehemently—then added, “there is, there can be no other cure for my miseries.”

“Of what nature are those miseries that force you to despair of a remedy?”

“They are complicated—I have no leisure to divide them.”

“Hear me for a moment—want certainly is unnumbered with your misfortunes—your exterior announces that you are not reckoned amongst the sons of poverty.”

“Has not your age, Monsieur, already taught you experience—then learn it from me—nothing is so deceitful as appearances—never judge of a man, either by his dress or address—you suppose me rich, because my habit is in no state of decay—yet for all that I am poverty-stricken. You think from the too great freedom of my opinions I would not make them better if I could—there again you are equally mistaken—

mistaken—my mind has changed within the last moment, and if you can say any thing to comfort me, I am now willing to hear it.”

“ Since you make this confession I have some hopes of you—I am inclined to be the friend of your wounded conscience—my function is the bond of my probity, as well as discretion—you are unfortunate—I have been unfortunate—this good youth, who is my Elève, like us has suffered a sad destiny—come, give me that pistol, we shall have no use for it. I will conduct your thoughts to that Supreme Deity with whom you are yet unacquainted—He is the friend of all who put their confidence in him—He will accept your penitence—He will pity and relieve you—set down by my side—you interest me—the horrors I felt begin to abate.—Oh! my God! how happy I shall be if it pleases thee that I should become the instrument of this poor mistaken creature’s reformation.”

The young man readily enough yielded the pistol into the hands of his intentional preserver.

preserve. "Let us throw it far away," said Dumount, casting it from him—he then took his penitent by the hand, and forced him to set down by his side.

William followed all their motions with a palpatating heart, astonished that his tutor, who, except himself, was the most suspicious of all men, should fail to mistrust; nay even put himself into his power, and for the first time in his life he ventured to accuse him of imprudence.

"Come now," continued the venerable Abbé to the still sullen incognito, "you must begin to engage my friendship by trusting me with your whole confidence—you must tell me what are your misfortunes, and through what source they have accumulated."

"Through the source of my own imprudence." He then recounted to them a tissue of disasters, which, though very terrible, presented no occasion of blame to be thrown on his own character, notwithstanding he had seemed to hint that he had drawn them on himself by his bad conduct;

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he informed Monsieur Dumount that he had been secretary to a Count d'Egeville; from which situation, owing to the treachery of a pretended friend, he had been discarded with ignominy; in short, that he found himself without a residence, without fortune, without recourses of any kind.

The humane Abbé, whilst endeavouring to console him under his afflictions, took out his purse, and presented him with a piece of gold, which he received with such extravagant demonstration of gratitude, that William, who till now had been a suspicious spectator, began to feel his heart interested for him—he also drew out his purse to double the gift of his governor, when the wretch, his eyes flashing fire at the sight of so much gold, fixed them on both, in a manner that terrified them; saying, in a voice bold, imperious, and determined, “Why do you set such feeble bounds to your liberality? You have a great deal of money—give it me instantly, or you die on the spot.” Terrified

fied and trembling they looked round to see if any one was near to whom they might call out for assistance, the road being within the reach of their cries, but no sounds issued from it; night was quick in its approaches, and all that was active in their spirits seemed to be frozen up by surprise, terror, and indignation.

"This hesitation will do you no good," exclaimed the ruffian; "deliver, or die." Saying this, he exposed to their view another pistol, the fellow to that which Dumont had thrown at a distance—unaided—unarmed—unable to resist, they could only load him with reproaches whilst they gave him their purses—but the villain was not yet contented; he saw the chains of their watches, and demanded them also. William could part with his money much more calmly than with the beloved watch, the gift of an adored parent—the very demand of it made him forget how badly he was prepared for combat, and stimulated him to act the part of a hero—fury took possession of his senses—

"Traitor!"

"Traitor!" cried he, drawing a knife from his pocket, "you shall not have my watch, but at the expence of my life."

The Abbé, animated by the example of his pupil, snatched the pistol from the assassin's hand, who immediately closed with them; but before the scuffle between them, for he was stronger than both, had produced any desperate effect, some horsemen, and a carriage, came within the distance of their voices, when raising them to the highest pitch of which they were capable, the villain broke from their hold, took the alarm, and flew from them with speed almost incredible.

Finding they were at liberty, the only use they could make of it was, to look on each other with indescribable terror; and they were still standing in mute astonishment when the very people appeared who had so fortunately occasioned their release from the most imminent danger; reassured by their presence, they recovered their faculties. These men asked them many questions, and having listened to the adventure,

venture, one of them cried out pretty abruptly, "Are you sure all this that you tell us is true?"

"Is it possible," said William, "that we should become the objects of your suspicions?"

"Let the old gentleman give me the pistol he holds in his hand," replied the other, "and I shall then know better what to think of the matter."

The readiness of the Abbé to comply with this demand, removed every existing doubt; and having congratulated both on their happy escape, the man who received the pistol tried to fire it in the air, but finding it did not go off, in looking for the obstruction they discovered, to the surprise of every body, that it carried no charge, either of ball or powder; a phenomenon, for which none of them being able to account, they agreed to return all together by the gate St. Antoine.

CHAP. VII.

CABINET COUNCIL.

FINDING themselves safe within the walls of their college, they very soon recovered their tranquillity enough to enter into conversation; and it cannot be supposed that the Abbé Dumount let slip such an opportunity to lecture his pupil upon the vices of mankind.

"My dear boy," said he, "what a lesson—what a melancholy lesson have we been taught in this evening's expedition—behold men as they are—learn to despise their perfidy—they are all ingrates—they plunge a poignard into your heart at the moment you offer them your hand: by their very nature they are treacherous—

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oblige

oblige them eternally—load them with favours—shew them all manner of humanity—make yourself the slave of sensibility in hearing them talk of their troubles—of bearing a part in them: do all this, and what is the reward you get for your civility—for your gifts—for your sympathy? Ah! they will never recompense your benefits with any thing but ingratitude.”

“My father—sure my father is an exception.”

The good governor nodded his approbation—a pause ensued—again he resumed his favourite topic.

“I owe,” said he, “all the miseries of my life to a variety of men’s treachery, hardly inferior to what we so lately experienced in the woods of Belleville—if they did not hold a pistol to my head, they were not less cruel, for they planted a thousand daggers in my heart; and it is the smart which even now I feel from those cureless wounds which makes me anxious to expose before you all the dangers of society—without

without my instructions, inexperienced as you are, you might have taken a fatal liking for men of the world—you might have rushed on that world with the confidence of a youthful imagination, and not have discovered the error of such conduct, until what is called society had made you the victim of its infernal calumnies; a deadly poison that hides its venom under the fairest words, and the most smiling looks—if you give them all you possess, they will profess themselves your debtors: believe them not—they only engage you by their pretended acknowledgments to multiply your bounty.”

“This is a very frightful picture indeed—I even think it of a deeper shade than any you have yet sketched on the canvass of caution: yet, my dear friend, I believe religiously every word you tell me, and your advice shall ever be the rule of my actions.—Alas!” added he, with a sigh, “what a pity that man should be so unmerciful, though created by the God of mercy!”

“Your observation is a just one, and it is because we will not be grateful to our Maker that he permits us to prey upon each other: it is for this reason that vice stalks about the world, sometimes clothed in hypocrisy, sometimes in hardened nakedness—it is a sword of the Almighty, and is the punishment of those who daringly offend him—we shall never see it vanquished, because that Power who permits can alone vanquish it.”

“Dear Sir, I had rather, much rather know my enemy, than have him act against me under a mask.”

“But that is a very difficult judgement to attain—one will cut your throat, and look in your face whilst he is doing it—another will do the same office, without shewing himself: he who is most likely to do you no harm is he whose character has little in it of consequence—and these, against whom you should be most on your guard, are such as profess themselves all fire—all zeal—all energy to serve and to love you. Naturally you attach yourself

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to the latter description of your foes, who will speak great things of you when they are sure they will be repeated to you, but against you on all other occasions: with your friends they will be the smoothest of your friends—with your enemies, the bitterness of your enemies.”

“ Pray, Monsieur Abbé, will you allow me to interrupt you for a moment, to ask the reason (for I know you do nothing without a reason) why you trusted to the appearance of that villain, before he assaulted us in the woods.”

“ Humanity, my dear pupil, is a principle of so active a nature, that it will sometimes drive caution from her station, and philanthropy will lull it to repose.—I was to blame—I was extremely culpable—ah! how blind, how conceited of my supposed wisdom, to fancy that by the strength of it I should be able to convert a sinner, whom a moment before, in my own hearing, had impiously denied his God—had flown in the face of his Maker—and was madly rushing, unbidden, into his awful presence

presence—by these traits I should have known him for the consummate wretch he afterwards proved himself—those who are not religious are incapable of harbouring one virtuous sentiment.”

“But what, my good Sir, whose very weakness are amiable, what could be the cause, that when we examined the pistols we found neither of them had been charged?”

“It shews the depredator did not go to the woods predetermined on plunder or self-destruction; for what other cause he came, this is beyond the line of my penetration to fathom: but we may conclude, that it was the unexpected sight of our gold which awakened his base passions, and kindled the sordid flame of avarice in his abject heart, making him turn with desperation on his benefactors.”

“Ah! Monsieur, may not extreme indigence——”

“I know what you would say—I know also the full force of the argument you mean

mean to advance—but, my dear young friend, it is erroneous—you nor I must not try to support as just what all laws, moral and divine, have announced unjust. An honest man, how great soever his extremity, cannot change his nature to commit a dishonest action: rather than adopt to his necessities the means of others, he will either die, or drag on his feeble existence by the aid of such voluntary offerings as the children of charity sometimes make to the children of poverty.”

“Good God!” exclaimed William, “it is hard to starve; yet it is still harder to depend for the preservation of life on a world, every member of which is impregnated with unfeeling barbarity.”

“Notwithstanding there is much good sense in this opinion of your’s, yet I object to it; for among the cruelties of which I accuse mankind, that of withholding their money from the necessitous has not been numbered: on the contrary, what merit can be claimed by indiscriminate bounty

may belong to the rich, if they had a better motive for their charity than that of popularity*.”

* I had a great inclination entirely to suppress this too high painting of a good mind prejudiced by education, and narrowed by disappointments; but on reading to an end the manuscript I find these lessons, which the amiable, but mistaken preceptor so liberally bestowed on his pupil, are absolutely necessary to be brought forward in excuse of our hero, who we shall see, at the conclusion of this history, blushing at his errors, and nobly exerting himself to correct them.

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CHAP. VIII.

A FIRST STEP INTO THE GREAT WORLD.

DUMOUNT, to render his moral lessons more interesting, and to impress them deeper on the mind of his pupil, wished to bring him acquainted with the real situation of the depredator in the woods of Belleville. In relating his adventures he had discovered to them that he was the *ci-devant* secretary of a Count d'Egeville, which nobleman had a son placed in the college of Navarre in the same class with William, and more in his favour than any other of the students. Indeed the young D'Egeville was the only one with whom he ever associated, not because he remarked in him any very essential qualifications, but be-

cause he fancied him to have less faults than the rest.

This young man, who did justice to the musical powers of his friend, had very often tormented him with solicitations that he would go with him to the house of his father, if it were only to hear his sister play; assuring him, with much energy, that she performed in a very superior stile on the harpsichord. It was these repeated invitations which put it into the head of Dumount, that by accepting one of them William might make some discoveries concerning the man who occupied so much of their curiosity: this idea he quickly communicated to his other self, who readily adopted it, with even more sanguine expectation than the original projector, who dared to hope, but seldom ventured to believe.

D'Egeville, charmed by a compliance so marvellous, and willing to secure his triumph, named the next day, which chanced to be a holiday, for paying a visit to his family; Dumount included himself in the party,

party, disgusted as he was with the world, rather than be separated from his pupil; on the first combat his passions would probably encounter; he had heard D'Egeville speak of Mademoiselle his sister so much in the strain of panegyric, that he conceived it impossible that his young friend was not to feel the impression of her charms at their first interview.

Count d'Egeville lived in the rue St. Louis; it was near four o'clock when they arrived at the door of his house, followed by Vincent, who carried under his arm some music for his young master, which having put into the hands of a domestic, he returned back to the college; and the two gentlemen were conducted by the same servant to a superb saloon, announcing their names to five or six men, who with a greater number of females were collected to receive them.

It would have been a difficult matter in such an assembly for our two bashful visitors to have distinguished where their first compliments were due, if the young Che-

valier had not removed their embarrassment by an immediate presentation to his father and mother, who not only received them graciously, but even oppressed them with their unmeaning civilities.

The Chevalier d'Egeville had represented William as one of the best musical performers that any country could boast the honour of producing, so that every body was prepared to give him no respite until he should have complied with their eager solicitations to treat them with a specimen of his skill: glad to be relieved from a situation so new, and so awkward, he readily sat down at the harpsichord, but not without first gracefully offering the precedence to Mademoiselle d'Egeville, who very smilingly refused the compliment he intended for her.

William was something of a poet as well as a musician; but the natural gloom of his mind tinged all his productions—he was ever the hero of his own verses, and though his compositions were consonant to the fine rules of harmonics, yet the plair^{the} arty,

tive sadness of the vibrating notes he drew were sure to pierce the heart in the same degree as they pleased the ear and satisfied the judgement—that to which he gave his suffrage, in preference to all his other little pieces, was a song written and composed before he had seen his father—it was this favourite which he selected for the present occasion, singing it to the soft tones of the instrument with an air so touching, that poor Dumont's cheeks were moistened with tears as he listened to the repetition of these misfortunes, which he knew to be not altogether fabulous: the words may be given here, but the energy with which he chanted them is only to be felt—it cannot be described.

SONG.

When the gloom of the night shall cover my eyes,
 When the forest resounds with my heart-rending sighs;
 Then darkness, thou friend of a wretched forlorn,
 Prolong thy sad empire, and chase away morn:
 Whose beams are obtrusive on sorrow's dim sight,
 But come melancholy, attendant on night,
 Come birds of ill omen, and lengthen her train,
 To me light is darkness, and pleasure is pain.

As

As I run through the storm, the winds howling round,
Their hoarse voice resounding, appeases my wound;
Inflicted by sadness, corroded by woe,
It's torment pursues me wherever I go.
Ah! father so tender—ah! mother so mild,
Will you ever thus fly your unfortunate child?
Dear sources of anguish! of anguish how vain,
You feel not my anguish, or hear me complain:
On the wings of swift echo I send you my sighs,
But echo unfriendly brings back no replies;
O father! O mother! my senses are flown;
Cut off in life's bud, I expire with a groan!

William having made an end of his song modestly received the flattering applauses of the whole company; whilst Dumount, who regarded Mademoiselle d'Egeville rather as a just than partial critic, observed with satisfaction that the praises she bestowed on his pupil did not derange the composure of his features, or add to the sedate expression of his fine eyes one ray of vivacity—truth obliges us to say that this fashionable belle was so little formed after the model of beauty or elegance, which William had made to himself as the criterion of feminine perfection, that his
governor

governor could not behold her with less approbation, or more indifference, than he did; yet when she asked him to give her the words and music of his song, he granted her request with politeness so natural, with gentleness so impregnated with grace, as gave her no reason to be dissatisfied, or to think herself neglected.

The young lady having promised to perform after William, now took his place at the harpsichord, and having tumbled over all the songs in his *portfeuille*, she chose a composition of his master's, which, with a thousand airs of distortion, meant to represent the graces, she executed, without ear or finger, in a stile so execrable, that had the composer witnessed her efforts he would hardly have known it to be his own: however, when she had completely mangled both the sense and the expression, there were not in the room, except our preceptor and his pupil, any pair of hands but what were clapped together in a perfect paroxysm of ecstasy at the wonders of her exquisite performance.

“ And

“And this,” cried William, “mentally is the sincerity of the world.”

Such as have the least pretensions are always the most easy to be flattered; the truth of which observation was exactly verified by this little pretender to music, who received the homage of her admirers with a self-sufficiency which seemed to say none of them had a higher opinion of her abilities than she herself entertained of them: under this unfortunate prepossession she continued to sing, and to play, until the very best of her friends began to give symptoms that they had quite enough of it, the strongest of which was their entering into small chatting parties; soon after a wider circle formed itself, where the pleasures of conversation succeeded to those of harmony.

“Is it a long time since,” said a fierce looking officer, of a haughty demeanour, speaking to Mademoiselle d’Egeville, “is it an age ago that you last saw your friend the Chevalier d’A——?”

“My

"My friend!" screamed out the musical lady, "ask me for him by any other appellation than that of *my* friend, and I shall tell you he has quite abandoned me, as well as all the rest of his friends."

"It is only love that can supersede friendship," said a kind of president, who would be thought a *belle esprit*.

"Good!" interrupted an overgrown Abbé, "I have just been informed the Chevalier has parted with his opera girl."

"Not at all," replied an old baroness, bending under a burden of diamonds; "I think I ought to know, and I assure you they are always together—I allow he has a mighty depraved taste; but indeed if he had the *means* to attach himself to a woman of condition, his present connection would be a great deal more inexcusable."

"Between ourselves," said the Abbé, "do you think he is much calculated to mix in good company?—they say——"

"Ah! what do they say," interrupted the officer.

"What

"What would you infer?" cried Madame d'Egeville.

"Charming!" pursued the Abbe, "so you really all pretend to know nothing of the matter—is it possible you have not heard that his birth is illegitimate?—nay, I see by this general surprise the affair has been a secret till I had the honour of revealing it."

"O Heavens!" exclaimed the whole circle in one voice,

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CHAP. IX.

MORE GENERAL CONVERSATION.

NOTHING can be more true—he is certainly illegitimate—his father, to be sure, was Count A——; but then his mother—nobody knows any thing of his mother—not so much as her name has ever transpired, or I should have the pleasure to announce it in your respectable circle.

“How is it, Abbé, that you are convinced of this extraordinary anecdote?”

“Because he confided it to me himself—do you require any better authority?”

“My God! that is very abominable—and to take upon him the title of Chevalier—but softly, Abbé,” added the sparkling baroness

baroness of diamonds, "may not the father of this pretended Chevalier be also illegitimate?"

"Oh, no! I am the most intimate of his friends—I have lived with him six months at a time—I have more than once seen his titles—no, it is impossible that any body can dispute his descent."

"But," cried Madame d'Egeville, lifting up her hands, whilst her eyes flashed fire, which might have consumed the offender, had he been within the reach of it; "but the Chevalier, you assure us, is a bastard? there ends our acquaintance—he must no more think of coming to my house—it is impossible to form one's society with men of his description."

"He is, however, well received every where by the women," observed the old Dowager.

"Yes," replied the Countess, with a sneer of contempt of *those* women, of which there are but *too* many."

"Oh!" interrupted the president, it is always the business of Plutus to repair the damages

damages occasioned by the errors of Nature."

The birth of this happy bon mot had the good effect to set every body laughing, except Dumount and his pupil, who perhaps did not understand it; we should also except the Baroness, who it was evident enough was bursting with resentment; yet when she rose up to leave the company, saluting them with infinite complacency, she last of all, with great affection, embraced the Countess, who returned it with equal, if not greater cordiality.

William cast on his friend a look that spoke his whole soul, and again said to himself, "this then is the world."

The Baroness had hardly made her stately person invisible to her friends in the saloon, than Madame d'Egeville addressed these words to the Abbé—"Ah! Abbé, you are very wicked, or very indiscreet—certainly you cannot be ignorant that the Baroness has long entertained a violent passion for the Chevalier."

"I know

"I know it well," replied the Abbé, and what I said about him was expressly to torment her."

"That was extremely charitable in you," retorted the officer, "yet I give you some merit, for she deserved to be mortified."

Every tongue now danced to the tune of scandal, and the Baroness was censured without mercy, until the Abbé having also taken his leave, the ridicule of the whole company changed its current, and it was thus that they pulled him to pieces.

"My God!" cried the Officer, "that Abbé is one of the most dangerous men in the world."

"Dangerous!" replied Madame d'Egville, "who is there that does not call him the very pest of society—false—treacherous—and deceitful."

The president, who was the next to retire, was the next to fall under their abuse, conveyed in strains of satirical merriment.

"That

“That is a poor inoffensive *figure*,” said the mistress of the house, “but he makes one die with laughing at his fine phrases.”

“Charming!” exclaimed the Officer, “he is a mere *figure* in rhetoric—his pleafantry is confined to puns—and his wit is not worth a farthing.”

The rest of the party as they went away suffered in their turns: the officer remained longer than the rest, but when he was gone the Count spoke to his wife after this manner:

“My dear, how often must I request of you to forbid that little paltry officer your house, who can do nothing but fatigue with his eternal nonsense such as have the misfortune to know any thing about him.”

“Mighty pretty indeed,” retorted the lady; “and so, Monsieur le Count, you really expect that I am to quarrel with every body who entertains *me*, and displeases *you*.”

“I wonder you do not hate him.”

“I am surprised you do not think him amiable.”

“Amiable!

"Amiable!—for what general or particular merit?"

"For the very great one of making himself agreeable to my humour."

"A fool!—that is always telling one of his own blunders as matter of entertainment."

"Oh, he dares not speak to me of them; I have formally forbidden him."

"But you will oblige *me* by not receiving him again."

"But—I shall oblige myself by inviting him to come."

"Ah, indeed!"

"Yes, indeed and indeed!—pray do not suppose that I am to be restrained like an infant."

"So, so, this is a second addition of the secretary—before I turned away that fop, your officer stood no chance—you could not endure him?"

"The dismissal of the young man you bred up with so much care from his childhood, is less an instance of your wisdom than inhumanity."

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"You must allow I shewed him a great deal of goodness."

"I have something else to do than to trouble myself with your goodness."

"Something else, Madame, which I doubt is not quite so much to your honour."

"What is it, Sir, that you dare to insinuate?"

"It is quite enough that only you should understand the whole extent of my meaning."

"O yes! you are vastly intelligent to be sure—and so delicate in——"

"I will prove to you, Madame, that there was wisdom in sending away my secretary—a little villain who had doubly robbed me."

"He robbed! He was incapable of such actions—or if he were capable of them, the blame falls upon yourself—you who gave him his education should have taken care of his moral and religious principles, so that if evil arises from your shameful neglect, you are answerable for

all the sins he has committed, or ever may commit."

"Part of the punishment, according to your own system, must belong to yourself—you, Madame, had the condescension to assist in forming the boy's mind; and I never heard that you planted in it either honour, honesty, or *virtue*; but these omissions have not hindered his being *extremely* grateful to you."

"You are quite right—but for his gratitude I should never have heard of *your* amour with the *little* Rosalie."

"Madame la Countess."

"Monsieur le Count."

They were neither of them able to announce more, and both grew so furious, that if the young Chevalier, with Mademoiselle his sister, had not interfered between them, the breach might have been made irreparable: however, by their endeavours, something like a peace was patched up, when each, on being restored to a small portion of calmness, gave evident signs how much they were shocked at hav-

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ing exposed themselves before two strangers, whose manners totally differed from their own, but who were too polite to give offence by going away till the reconciliation was fully established; by which time, as if nothing had happened to disturb their composure, the Count and Countess entreated that Monsieur Dumont would return with his pupil very often to increase the charms of their agreeable societies; this they promised to do, but without the least intentions of keeping their promise.

Being returned to college, and quietly seated in their own apartment, "My dear Elève," said the good Governor, "you have now been in what is called society—pray how do you like it?"

"Not at all—I think it so odious that I will, if possible, always avoid it."

"Well, well! observe I give you no advice on the subject; it shall not be said that I make you out of love with mankind, and experience will speak ten times more to the purpose; I shall therefore say no more of the fine people we have left behind

us, but I would turn your thoughts on the young man who deceived us in the woods of Belleville."

"Ah!" cried William, "what I have heard of that poor youth fills me with sentiments of compassion—how was it possible he should be virtuous, brought up in such a family—frequenting so corrupt a circle as that we are come from? Consider the contagious example of those who supplied to him the place of parents, in giving him the necessaries of life, whose conduct he durst not inspect too nicely, much less dare to arraign—who has heard nothing of honour—who knows nothing of religion—O dear! dear Dumont! to whom I owe a different education, how was it in the nature of things that this neglected wretch should escape contamination?"

"I approve your generous warmth, but must correct your sentiments, that hereafter they may not mislead you—your vindication is natural, it does honour to your own heart, but it cannot paint with white the villain whose vices have already dipped

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him black—a soul that is truly honest in all trials, in every situation will preserve its integrity—the man we are speaking of was certainly inclined to vice from his very cradle—he was in himself vicious, though perhaps he became still more so in that abominable house of the Count d'Egeville—when I went there you know it was with no design of revealing the crime of his secretary; on the contrary, I hoped only to find out, by chance conversation, whether the recital of those distresses he had made to us were founded in fact, or raised in fiction; so far our visit has answered, that we are assured he has been unfortunate as well as guilty; he could never have possessed a good heart; yet I will agree with you that in any school less abandoned he might have been more worthy.”

“I hate,” cried William, with vivacity,
“I hate the whole family of D'Egevilles.”

“Are you sure that you hate the daughter of that house?”

G 3

“O worse,

“ O worfe, a thousand times worfe than any of them—what must be the daughter of such a mother—affectation, dress, and intrigue will fill up all her hours—and dishonour will be the portion of that man who shall call himself her husband.”

Dumount smiled to hear his own sentiments clothed in the language of his pupil; “ Such,” said he, “ are the world and its inhabitants—you must either, my amiable disciple, always keep clear of it, or become like those who sacrifice every thing to make up its imaginary enjoyments.”

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CHAP. X.

THE LUXEMBOURG.

THE day, on which our hero completed his seventeenth year, was instituted as a sort of jubilee to hallow the transports of his affectionate governor, who could not look upon him without lifting up his heart to God in thankfulness, for having created a being so perfect; there was more piety than partiality in these emotions; no young man of his age had so few faults, so many perfections; the former resulted only from a mistaken education, and were harmless to all but himself, who languished under the effects of an habitual gloom, too well cultivated by the precepts and example of his otherwise excellent tutor; whilst the charms of his person, the gentleness of his disposition,

disposition, his judgement, his understanding, his accomplishments, operated less to his own, than to the gratification of others: all that knew, adored in him those fine qualities of which he alone was insensible.

The exulting preceptor, accompanied by his amiable ward, were just returned from chapel to receive the compliments of their college brotherhood, on William's natal day, when a billet was put into the hands of Dumont, containing these words:

"Monsieur, come this evening to the Luxembourg, in the *Allée des Carmes*, where you will have something very interesting communicated to you—come alone, and at eight o'clock. Sept. 12th, 1746."

The opening of this extraordinary note threw them into a great deal of confusion—Dumont had no acquaintance—nobody knew him—from whom then could it come?—with what design was it sent?—should he go?—suspicion said, No—fortitude, backed by courage, bid him adventure.—William was totally against it, except he was permitted to attend him; but

the

the Abbé, scrupulously delicate, declared he would abide by the injunction laid upon him in the billet; "if it is right," said he, "to obey its contents in part, it is right to comply with them in toto"—it cannot be doubted that his young and cautious friend yielded to this determination with great reluctance; however, to appease his apprehensions of what mischief might threaten him from the designs of wicked men, he exacted his promise, that "whatever the business of this stranger might be, he would speak to him no where but on the terrace;" and the anxiety they both experienced, till the hour of appointment, is better imagined than described; as are also the tumults of impatience with which, after he was gone, William supported his absence.

Dumont returned about nine with a countenance so changed, that William ghaſt, confounded, and dismayed, could hardly articulate a few disjointed words, to ask what it was which had alarmed him. Dumont tried to speak, but his voice
 G 5 faltered

faultered—he tried to hide his tears, but his eyes would betray them.—“Dear, dear Sir,” cried the agitated youth, “what is the matter?—what dreadful calamity has befallen us?”—The old man caught him in his arms, pressing him with involuntary tenderness, as if he would have said, “you are dearer to me than ever.”—“Ah! how terrible must be our misfortunes,” exclaimed William, “when even you, you who are so good, so pious, want resolution to announce them.”

Dumount affected to smile—it was but affectation. “How soon, dear child, you are discomposed,” said he; “what is it I have to tell you?—nothing affecting—nothing very affecting”—trying to vanquish his emotions—“your father—that is all!—your father is obliged to quit his residence!”—“Ah!” cried William, “then you have seen my father!”

“I have;—it was himself who sent for me.”

“My God! and what did he say to you?—what is the business that calls him away

away?—how long will it be before I shall again behold his dear, his benign countenance?"

"I do not know either on what account he goes, or how long he may stay—do you forget that whatever concerns your father is wrapped up in darkness—that his ways are as mysterious as the ways of heaven!"

William wept.—"Ah! tell me every word this revered parent delivered to you."

"I am ready to do it.—Dumount," said he, "I am obliged to make a very long journey—take care of my son—my poor William!—I confide him to your care—when I come back, restore him to me, such as I leave him—wise, discreet, intelligent, and, if it be possible, let vivacity be added to the number of his accomplishments—the occasion which may, for a very long time, deprive me of his presence, is indispensable. It will last, perhaps—but it is in vain for me to make calculations—whether my absence be short or long, I shall always be mindful of him, and of
G 6
you

you—but I chuse now that he should quit his studies—I desire that you immediately take him from college, and that you will hide yourselves, from all observation, in the most obscure part of Paris, there to wait my return.—Here your father paused; again he spoke, but only to repeat the charges he before had given me; particularly renewing his recommendation of the care he expected me to take of the precious deposit he entrusted to me; he then gave me money, and commanded me to return home.”

“Do you see any thing very frightful in all this, my good friend?” Dumount asked his last question, as well as told his story with such an air of perplexity, as made William observe his expressions wanted that firmness which is the test of sterling candour. “Ah! Sir,” cried he out, “you kindly dissimulate, my father abandons me—I have no longer a father.”

“Why do you think this of your father—have you deserved that he should abandon you?—alas! can my amiable pupil
humble

humble the friend who loves him, by doubting his veracity—yes, I love you, my son ! I will never separate myself from you—oh, never—never !”

The young man saw his beloved governor so deeply oppressed, that he would ask him no more questions, though convinced there were troubles in store which his tenderness would not permit him to unveil—“if it were for my advantage,” said he to himself, “he would inform me of them; he sees it for my peace, that I should be deceived—shall I dare to oppose the wisdom I do not understand?—No—I will submit to its dictates.”

The very next morning Dumount and his Elève took their departure from college; the same hour they were settled in a lodging at the corner of the *Rue St. Victor*, near the king's garden. William could not but observe, that their new apartment was neither handsome nor commodious; the Abbé saw in his looks a dissatisfaction which his delicacy would not allow him to express, and made an apology for what was
deficient;

deficient, by saying, "they must be good managers, during the absence of his father, who, at such a distance, might find it difficult to send frequent remittances." William asked if his father had promised to write to them?—"There can be no doubt," replied Dumont, "but that he will let you hear from him—is he not a father?—think you a father will deny himself so sweet a consolation?"

William again saw that he was the victim of deception, but he saw it with silent submission. Their manner of life was now very different from what it had been at college—no Vincent waited on them—no masters attended them—no delicious viands crowned their board—no heart-cheering wine entered their lips—a woman servant did for them all their little *Ménage*—their repasts chiefly consisted of herbs, and their only beverage was water; yet for all this William shewed no tokens of discontent—sometimes, indeed, he would gently express fears that the good Abbé was straitened for money; on which occasion,

sion, the other would shew him trifling sums, pretending they were sent to him by an unknown conveyance. In this manner passed a whole year, which would have appeared extremely tedious, had they been less the pupils of philosophy, or less attached to each other—they pursued their studies together; they reaped as much pleasure as when at college, from their rural excursions into the country; it was only the aspect of their affairs that had changed; the face of nature had undergone no revolution; that was alway charming, always worthy of exalted contemplation—the royal garden they also thought very agreeable, and, at the most unfrequented seasons, sometimes ventured to walk in it—the small wood in the centre—the streams that bordered its banks, in their way to the river—its retired walks—its rustic aspect—all conspired to make it be considered, at least by the lovers of nature, as the most charming garden in Paris; but let it be remarked, that it was in 1746 when this preference was bestowed upon it.

At

At the commencement of the second year of their seclusion, in the *Rue St. Victor*, William began to give way to the most furious inquietude ; the reason of it was this—Dumount, from whom he had never before been separated, now went out every day without him, so that they hardly ever met but at dinner, or at night ; when the old man would redouble his caresses, and renew the tenderest professions of eternal friendship, but ever charging him to ask no question of whither he went, or when he would return, so that the mysteries that enveloped him at his birth seemed every day to accumulate darkness, and to become more impenetrable !

The embarrassment of his governor—the retrenchment of their before *very* small expences—the difference of his dress, once that of a gentleman—always decent, now almost in rags, and no news of his father—all these calamities falling on the head of poor William, flung him into a decline, which promised to remove him out of all his troubles ; the rapid approach of death

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he would have welcomed with all his heart, but for the grief of parting with his faithful Dumount—three weeks, night and day, did that indefatigable friend watch by the side of his bed, procuring him, nobody knew how, every little indulgence to which he had been accustomed, besides feeding his drooping mind with the balm of hopes, for which there was no foundation, but in his anxiety for the recovery of his precious charge—"all goes well," he would say, "throw off this indisposition of spirit, get strength to bear the good fortune which is coming to you; though it may not be here immediately, believe what I tell you—it is at no great distance—you will soon get a letter from your father, who loves you with such exquisite fondness, that I shall incur his hate, if any thing should happen to you; do not expose me to his curses—live, dear, dear William—live for his—for my—for your own sake—live, and be happy!"

William, who respected the voice of his governor next to that of heaven, was so
much

much comforted by these flattering conversations, that, in spite of the danger which threatened him, the disorder took a favourable turn, and in a little while he was able to assist himself; yet he now always found Dumount at his side, still feeding him with fallacious expectations, that very much aided the perfect establishment of his health; but what was his astonishment, when informed by the woman who made his sick messes, and for which purpose came often to his chamber, that every night, during the time he was upon the recovery, the Abbé, having first seen him asleep, had regularly gone out of the house, and not come back till five in the morning, when he went to bed, where he reposed but a short time before he again presented himself in the chamber of his pupil.

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CHAP. XI.

THE DUNGEON.

WILLIAM's impatience, at this strange conduct of his tutor, got the better of his prudence, his respect, his moderation; and one day, just as he had determined that at their next interview the occasion of it *should* be explained, the same woman who gave him the first, brought him a second alarm of much greater magnitude, by rushing into his room, and crying out with vehemence of tone and gesture—"Ah! Monsieur, your good preceptor—run—fly—they have carried him to prison!"

William stood aghast—"To prison—to prison!" echoed he—"my God!" wringing his hands—"my God! what, where, when, who has sent him to prison?"—"They say, Monsieur,

Monfieur," replied the girl weeping, "the dear, kind-hearted gentleman is fent there for debt?"

"My God!—to prifon, and for debt!" These words he kept on pronouncing without intermiffion, till, flying on the wings of torture, he arrived at the door of the commiffioner of that diftrict in which they refided, where he was informed, by the magiftrate, that his governor had been arrefted, on a note of hand, for a hundred and twenty livres." He rushed out, from the prefence of the judge, with even greater precipitation than he had entered—his feet fcarce touched the ground as they bore him to the outside of that dungeon where his friend was confined, with a frantic air, irrefiftible to the keepers, he commanded to have the door thrown open; but what became of him when he faw this beloved, this venerable man, pale, languid—laying fretched on a ragged mat, in an obfcure hole, lighted only by a fmall grate—"Ah!" cried he, cafting himfelf on the bofom of the old man, who fretched out his shackled

arms

arms to embrace him, "ah! my father—my dear Dumount, is *this* the felicity you made me expect—to see you thus—to see you in chains! and for me—yes, my soul tells me that it is I—I, who have forged them for you—remove, oh! remove the veil which has so long obscured my condition; put an end to the reserve that has, of late, so miserably tortured me, or arm yourself with stoic fortitude to see me die at your feet!"

"You must not die; I cannot bear *that*," said the old man, sobbing—"henceforward I cast away all concealments—yes, my child, my dear child, I will tell you every thing—but talk no more of dying; I repeat to you I cannot bear that—rather than sink to the grave like cowards, let us live nobly to combat with our misfortunes! He who inflicts, is able to support us under them."

William sat down on the ground beside him; he held one of his hands, which sometimes he pressed to his lips, sometimes
to

to his heart, whilst Dumount continued speaking:

“It is no longer in my power to hold you in easy ignorance—know all—learn every thing, and grieve more for your own fate than for mine.” When I went to the Luxembourg, as I had been ordered, I perceived, in the *Allée des Carmes*, a man measuring the path towards me with immoderate paces—I looked, I suspected, I was convinced it was your father—“Dumount,” said he, his voice scarcely audible, “Dumount, it is done; I must abandon!” “Who, Monsieur,” cried I, interrupting him, “whom is it that you must abandon? say not that it is my William—say not that it is your son that you threaten to abandon!” “William,” said he, “I am forced to renounce—yet William is not my son.”—“Not your son!” I exclaimed.—“No, he replied; without being mine, he is the original of my misfortunes; and those of a person at once the most charming, the most perfidious!”—“Ah! Monsieur, you will certainly

certainly see this amiable, this worthy child once more—behold him once, for one moment, though the next you should cast him from your arms for ever.”—“Never, never,” said he, “what you ask, I never will grant—if you knew me better, you would pity me more than you now do him. Dear Dumount, advise him immediately to enter on some business, by which he may support his wretched existence : the burden of him to me is intolerable ; caution him to be silent on his birth, it will cost him his life to reveal it.”—“I cast myself at the feet of this austere, this cruel man ; I no longer call him your father ; he disclaimed the title that would be so glorious to him. I clung to his knees, I deluged them with my tears—oh ! with what energy did I try to move his compassion for you ; but what were his vague replies?”—“He is not my son—oh ! what is it for which I grieve ! Dumount, if you knew—but I cannot—adieu ! think not of me ; think only of yourself—I bid you not to bestow a thought on me—I am not the father of your boy ;
but

but my fate is so horrible, that I carry contagion for all who approach me"—suddenly he put into my hands a small purse, and fled from me.

"But he is my father," cried William, "my heart tells me that he is indeed my father—sad, sad truth—he is cruel!—who then is merciful? Oh! my kind, my venerable preceptor, that humanity, which should soften the whole world, lodges in thy feeling heart, and leaves all the rest of mankind destitute! but why is it I have the affliction to behold that body, which contains a soul so feeling, fettered in bonds!"

"The small sum I received from the man whom you persist in calling your father, and who, I am persuaded, is so in reality, the very little money he gave me at our last interview, with all the management I could use, lasted us but a short time; I then, unknown to you, procured a few scholars, and those I daily attended, which occasioned my frequent long absences from home—you were very good—you asked

me

me no questions, but I read in your eyes the anxiety my conduct cost you, yet I could find you bread, poor as it was, by no other means, which made me boldly pursue it. I had but few pupils, some of them never paid me, and, in the height of my distress, you were taken sick; a thousand things, that I could not procure you, were necessary to your preservation; I borrowed of an usurer the sum for which I am now under confinement; my close attendance on you, in the time of your sickness, lost me the few scholars I had before; they said, I had neglected them, and would receive me no longer; necessity urged me to undertake a laborious business, which pleased me the better for occupying only my hours of rest, and leaving me those of the day to pass in your chamber; alas! my work, though hard, was not profitable; I could not pay my steel-hearted creditor, and you see what he has done to me! Beloved charge—most amiable of children—what must be thy fate? oh, thou,

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who

who hast neither parent nor friend, what will become of thee?"

Instead of answering the old man, William started on his feet, and ran out of the dungeon; but, before Dumount could in any manner account for his sudden disappearance, he saw him re-enter, his handsome countenance brightened by animation; he fell on the neck of his tutor, whilst the keeper of the prison was busy in relieving him from his fetters. "Dearest of friends," cried the transported youth, "perfect model of divine goodness, submit that I should take off these chains with which my misfortunes have bound you—your debt is discharged, and you are at liberty."

"But how are they discharged?—by what means have you discharged them?"

"Honestly."

"Your watch?"

"It is gone."

"I am sorry for it," William, "I am very sorry."

"Do you envy me the only felicity I have known from my birth, to this exquisite

quisite moment, in which I bring you freedom."

"Alas! that watch so dear to you—the gift of"—he looked at the man who was assisting him, and stopped—

"Oh! thou to *me*, the best, the tenderest of fathers!" cried the exemplary youth, "speak no more of the watch; had its price been short of your ransom, I would have sold myself to have redeemed you! I never knew the value of this precious toy till now—I shall never regret the having disposed of it—what a world of happiness has it purchased me." He spoke no more than he felt; he had never been so happy before: as to Dumont, it is impossible to describe the exultation of his heart; not so much for his own liberation, as for the noble display of principle which he had witnessed in his beloved, his glorious pupil!

Thus restored to each other, arm in arm they walked back to their poor little lodgings, where they were received with so much joy, by their only dependant, as

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shewed,

shewed, whatever she might think of their poverty, she knew how to estimate their virtues—she congratulates them a thousand times—she flies to prepare for them their favourite, yet frugal soup; but she wonders, in her own mind, how it is possible they should look so cheerful, and appear so contented, as if the air of a prison had enlivened rather than oppressed them.—It must have been a mind more delicate than her own that could have solved this enigma.

Their repast being over, William laid down a purse upon the table, in which was ten *louis*, the large overplus of what had been paid him for his watch, and asked the Abbé, with a smiling air, what they should do to increase their little capital? “For my part,” added he, “I think we cannot do better than to make that knowledge I have gained at college useful to our necessities. I really wish, very much, to try what my talents will produce.”

“In you,” my child, said the old man, “~~his~~ condescension is *real* dignity, and I shall

shall not oppose it—what is the line in which you wish to embark?”

But as we are got out of the dungeon, it is time we should conclude this chapter, and reserve William's answer for the next.

CHAP. XII.

THE ALARM.

“ I SHOULD like,” said William, “ to give lessons in music—it is a liberal art, and a gentleman may teach it without disgracing himself.”

“ But have you considered, my dear Elève, that if you make this election, you must be subject to the caprices, the haughtiness, the ill-humour of all the dunces you may happen to instruct—those who are deficient in genius are sure to accuse the master for their own want of it; they think him answerable for their stupidity, because he receives their money. It is thus they will speak to you.—‘ But, Sir, here are so many months passed in which I have learnt nothing—the Countess de ———,

Madame

Madame ———, and the Marchioness de ———, are all excellent musicians; they have been under your tuition not much longer than myself: all this is mighty odd, and I assure Mr. What-d'ye-call'em there is no accounting why it should be so.' Ah! amiable William! you will have great occasion for all the patience, all the gentleness you possess, to support you under so many mortifications as you must encounter from pride and ignorance. I am grieved you should be subject to them—yet the recourse is an honest one—I have nothing to say against it—it is worthy of your education, and it will be profitable." Here ended the conference; the afternoon was remarkably fine, and they went out to enjoy it in the king's garden.

They had just entered a retired walk when a venerable old man passed by them, attended by one of about thirty, whose countenance was gloomy and furious; he cast on them a piercing look of examination, and exclaimed, "It is him—my father

ther—there—oh! it must be himself—he has every feature of the Marquis.”

“Are you sure it is he?” replied the old man.

“Quite certain,” said the other, lowering his voice; “him we have so long been seeking is at last found, and he shall die.”

Dumount, and his young friend, heard no more of their discourse; the strangers were gone, but they had heard enough to petrify them with astonishment at a menace so extraordinary.

“Ah! my father! my father! we shall soon be separated,” cried William; “behold my fate is accomplished.”

“Suppose it not, my child; however this adventure may surprise us, what great danger does it threaten—these tygers dare not kill you—they dare not come under our roof to cut your throat, and we will no more meet them in this garden.”

Notwithstanding the Abbé pretended so much composure, he was in fact even more agitated than William himself; they hastened home with all imaginable speed, and
shutting

shutting themselves up, spent some hours in forming projects how to escape the toils that were set for them: it was near midnight before they had determined by what mode to secure their safety; at last it was settled, that immediate flight from Paris would be the surest—in consequence of this arrangement Dumount, with the purse in his hand, went to the bedside of his host and hostess, when having fully satisfied all their demands, he put it again into his pocket, and returned back to the room where he had left William, to hurry him out of the house as soon as he could; but as they were each folding up a small parcel of linen to take with them, their senses were almost put to flight by a loud and obstinate knocking at the street door—the man of the house, who heard it as well as themselves, was running out of his chamber to open it, but William prevented him, whilst Dumount went to the window, and, calling from thence, asked who it was that disturbed them at an hour so unseasonable,

and

and what business warranted the intrusion?

"Let me in," said a voice, which had nothing of treachery in it—I am the messenger of one you ought to respect."

"Great God!" cried William, "if it should be from my father—if he should have relented—ah! let him in—let him in, I beseech you, though I should pay for this rashness with my life."

Dumount, who had imbibed the same glimmering ray of hope that inspired his pupil, did not hesitate a moment, but went himself to the door, and threw it open with the boldness of an innocent man, who, though he will not trifle with life, can at all times meet death with composure: a servant entered, who delivered him a letter, respectfully adding, quickly, gentlemen, read the happy summons—lose no time, but come with me.

William had cast his eyes on the direction—he saw it was in the hand of his father—he shouted with joy; but in his eagerness to tear it open, had nearly demolished

molished its contents: the words were these:

BILLET.

“Imprudent William, your father would yet save your life, when you, perhaps, will occasion to him the loss of his own—fly with my faithful domestic—come to me at Valence; and you, Monsieur Dumont, do not you abandon your pupil, I have urgent occasions for you—come with him: no parleying—no indecision—come instantly, or where is the strength that can save you from destruction.”

CHAP. XIII.

THE INN AT VALENCE.

THIS letter, which it was impossible could be a forgery, produced its full effect; they neither demurred, or were undecided; but bidding the servant, who came express, to shew them what road they were to take, they followed him out of the house, almost without speaking to each other. He conducted them with quick steps to the *boulevard neuf*, where a post-chaise waited, into which they entered with the same confidence and spirit as before they had testified on quitting their lodging in the rue St. Victor—they soon found themselves on the road to *Montargis*, and the driver conveyed

veyed them along with so much swiftness, that at break of day he brought them to *Nemours*.

After their first emotions, which were made up of surprise, joy, and apprehension, had a little subsided; when they were still suspending between hopes and fears; when silence began to give place to expression—“What,” cried William, “can my father mean by the epithet of *imprudent*, which he affixes to me—ah! Dumount! you who can answer for my conduct, will you not tell him I have never been imprudent—alas! somebody must have deceived him—he says too I shall be the cause of shortening his days. My God! all these accusations are very—very terrible.”

“They are indeed,” said Dumount; “but take courage, my child—depend first on God, next on your own integrity; and rejoice, at all events, that your father no longer disowns you.”

During their drive they asked the servant, who attended them both as guide and guard, several questions, which he civilly excused

excused himself from answering, and in a manner that made them perceive his master had commanded him to be silent.

A few small difficulties impeded the progress of their journey, so that they did not reach Valence till the tenth day, about eight o'clock in the evening. The servant, who conducted them to a very handsome hotel, asked if the gentleman was yet arrived?—The postillion, of whom he inquired, said, "No.—But," added he, "I met him at Lyons—you know it is only one post, so that he will be here either this night, or early to-morrow morning." They durst only say to the servant, "Is it your master for whom you inquire?" Respectfully taking off his hat, he answered "Yes!" and conducted them to an elegant apartment, where having refreshed themselves they retired to rest, being half dead with the fatigues of so long a journey.

It was four in the morning when they were awakened from a sound sleep by the rattling of a carriage, which ran with velocity

city over the pavement till it stopped at the door of the inn.

"He is come," cried William, starting up in his bed, trembling all over—"It is he—it is my father." At the same instant that cruel father entered the chamber—William made a motion, as if he would jump out of the bed to cast himself at his feet; but with a look that rendered him immovable—"Stay where you are," said he, "I neither want your duty, nor will accept it."

William groaned—the groan was echoed by Dumount.

"You are not my son, Monsieur; how often shall I repeat it to you—I am not your father—the veil is dropped—you made my misfortunes—you have now finished them—get up both of you, and attend me in the next chamber." He went away, leaving them to do as he commanded.

Dumont, though scarcely less affected than William, assisted him, without speaking, to put on his garb of poverty; he as
silently

silently permitted his officious kindness; he could not help himself, his joints were stiffened with horror, and his eyes blinded by sorrow; neither of them spoke, because each knew that his voice was not to be trusted. Having thrown his clothes about William, the old man took him tenderly by the arm, and supported him to the awful presence, not of a kind father, but a severe tyrant, their passage to him might have been tracked by their tears.

He said to William, repulsing him as he would have knelt before him—"Have I not told you, young man, that I have no claims upon you—that dear error which has cost me so much, is done away—it is no longer your friend—it no longer pleads for you—and I now see you, for the last time, to swear by Heaven and earth, that from this hour I cast you from my protection—that I cast you from my thoughts, if it be possible—that I abandon you to your fate—that I have done with you forever."

William

William heard this dreadful denunciation, but not distinctly; his hearing, his sight, his strength, all forsook him—his colour fled—he was sick at heart—his knees smote against each other—he clasped his hands together—he cast up his eyes to Heaven—he tottered—he groaned—and he fell.

It was a long time before William recovered his senses—he saw himself surrounded by strangers—no father to terrify—no Dumont to soothe him—every face was new to him—he looked round for those he wanted to see, but he saw them no where—he called upon them with the voice of insanity, until it was quite lost in hoarseness: one of the many who assiduously aided to restore him imprudently told him that the gentlemen, for whom he inquired, had left Valence together, and were expected to return there no more. He was even less prepared for this second shock on his sensibility than he had been for the first, having less strength of mind or body to support him under it, and he relapsed into his

his former state of death-like inaction—the people of the house compassionately lifted him on the bed, and seated themselves round him, expecting to receive his last sighs; but though he neither moved, nor seemed to breathe, yet in fact he was not insensible to the lamentations they uttered over him.

“Dear child,” cried an old woman, as she wiped away the tears that rolled down her cheeks with the back of her hand—“thou art indeed a poor little lamb led to the slaughter, and the devil will surely have the butchers who send thee to Heaven.”

“Ah! barbarians!” said another, “what a pity so handsome a youth should be abandoned by his own father—by his preceptor too, who no longer ago than last night seemed to worship the very ground he trod on.”

“Ah!” observed a third, “they have been gone too hours, yet it hardly seems a minute since the chaise drove away with them at such a mad rate; if my prayers are heard, they will have their necks broken before

before they get to the end of their journey."

"Yes," cried the landlord, "a curse must attend such cruelty, to leave him upon strangers, and never so much as to say take care of him."

William sighed deeply—they all started up as if his ghost had appeared to them—they believed him past all assistance, but now some ran one way, some another, to bring him restoratives, and administered to him with so much eager humanity, that as soon as he was able to speak he tried to make them his acknowledgements.

"Exert yourself, Monsieur," said the master of the inn; "I am heartily glad to see you once more on this side of eternity—suppose these bad men have left you without money, never mind it, you shall live with me—I shall take care that you do not want necessaries—you must not think of the difference between my house and that of Monsieur, your father's. I shall love you extremely well—yet there are no indulgences

dulgences so sweet as those one receive under the paternal roof."

Every word he uttered pierced William to the soul—he squeezed the hand that would have fed him—he embraced the arms that would have protected him, but he would be a burden to no man; and the first moment he found himself freed from the kind, but oppressing importunities of his new friends, unobserved by any body, he takes up his little baggage, and passes through the gates of Valence, where we first pointed him out to the observation of our reader, to whose judgement we then made a reference, and who by this time must have decided on the complication of his destiny. Let us follow his footsteps to see what more will befall him.

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CHAP. XIV.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT.

WILLIAM, no longer able to discern the citadel of Valence, or the stately cloisters of its venerable abbey, which had all gradually sunk away from his aching sight, struck into the first solitary road that offered itself to his pensive steps, and led him ignorant of his route to the borders of *Isere*; he pursued the path of these waters, which widen as they approach *Dauphiné*; there he turned a little to the left of *Romans*, and found himself in a vast plain, with the worst companions in the world—can the miserable have any worse than their own reflections?

Fatigue

Fatigue invited him to repose—he sat down at the foot of a tree, but sleep he could not—his thoughts were all employed in searching for the motive which influenced his father and Dumount to abandon him. The day began to decline—a faint light was only perceptible—the last rays of the sun trembling on the face of nature, announced the approach of night—all creation appeared to be wrapped in tranquillity, except William, whose mind was restless even to tumult—he laid himself on the grass—his face rested on his hands—his long luxuriant hair floated in the winds—he opened his large blue eyes, but to weep—he opened his mouth, but to utter groans and lamentations.

“My father,” cried he, “once so kind, now so cruel—what have I done to incur your hatred?—how often have you pressed me to your heart—called me your son—your William—your beloved William—dear delicious moments, are ye gone, never—never to return.—No, never will his arms open to me again—never—never

more

more shall my eyes meet his—he disowns me—I am thrown off by my father—I remain alone in the universe——O God! and you *too* Dumount—you also have cast me from your heart—you too have abandoned the youth you once loved—him who you so long, so tenderly cherished—was it necessary your conduct, as well as your lessons, should teach me that *all* men are inhuman—*all*, all treacherous, wicked and unjust—for thy sake Dumount, since thou, *thou* art unfaithful, I will fly from mankind—I detest—I abhor them. O Heaven direct me to some lonely forest, inhabited by savages, whose very instinct will teach them that pity for my woes which is denied me in society. I will pass my days in a retreat, unknown to the rest of the world; invoking the Supreme, by incessant prayer, to re-establish the calm of my soul—I would ask, that I might think no more of my father's malediction, or of my friend's treason."

Thus spoke the amiable, the interesting William—his ideas contracted—his head confused

confused—his spirits plunged in chagrin—his heart overcharged with affliction—he knew little or nothing of men; those he best knew had deceived, had insulted, had forsaken him: he would therefore live by himself—he would make no exceptions in favour of any man—he would regard all men as monsters. These opinions were the fruits of his education, perhaps of his misfortunes; his heart did not produce them; the soil was much too grateful; it was capable of ripening to perfection all the generosity, as well as all the virtues of humanity.

All the time that William was making his lamentations, a beautiful young boy, leaning against the tree under which he had thrown himself, listened, unseen, to his moving complaints, and cried out, just as he had ended them, “Alas! poor Monsieur, what is the matter with you?”

William starting up, demanded the motive of a curiosity which offended him.

The child looked in his face with undiscrivable softness—“Why should you

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be angry," said he; "are you not very unfortunate?"

"What if I am."

"I want to know who are the wicked men that have used you so ill?"

"It signifies nothing to you."

"Oh! you would not be so passionate if you knew me."

"Who are you, then?"

"One that can do you no harm—but how do you like me?"

"If you was not a boy, and will in time be a man, I should think you amiable—yes, charming—but as a man I must hate, abhor, and detest you."

"Oh! it is only my dress that causes your error—I am a little harmless girl, my name is Marienna; my father, Germain, and I live two leagues from hence, in a very pleasant forest—that is our servant, Germain, who you see watching our horse whilst it crops a little grass to refresh itself."

His father—Dumount—his misfortunes are all forgotten, whilst he contemplated

the charms and the graces of this enchanting wood nymph. Ah! how different the first-sight sensations he felt for this child of nature, to those he experienced for Mademoiselle d'Egeville, with all her accomplished arts. "Beautiful Marienna," he exclaimed, "what can have induced your father to hide such treasures in a forest?" "That," replied she, "is his secret—if he had given it me in keeping, I would tell it you with all my heart, for I think you are very honest," sighing, "because you are so handsome—my father, no doubt, will tell you himself."

"How shall I ever see your father?"

"Ah! you will see him every day, when you come to live with us."

"Live with you, divine creature!—do you invite me to live with you?"

"To be sure I do; can you think I have already forgotten when I heard you call out to God that he would find you a forest to dwell in? No; I thought, at that very moment, you should go home with us—my father will console him," said

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I to myself, "And so will I, if he will let me?"

"Ah! Marienna, how touching is the sound of your voice—how sweet are your words—how gentle the expression of your eyes!"

"I am very glad they please you, my poor Monsieur."

"Have you been brought up always in the forest?"

"We have lived there six years."

"How old are you, adorable Mariena?"

"Germain says I am fifteen and a bit—Germain is a very good man, but not so genteel as yourself."

"How entertaining—how beautiful you are!"

"Yes, my father and Germain often tell me that I am very pretty; I am quite reproached that you should think as they do."

"What innocence—what simplicity! I have then, at last, met with one sincere soul on whom I can depend; but she is not of the world—she has been educated in a forest."

"That is just like my father; oh! he will doat upon you—give me your hand, and come with me."

It would be unnatural to suppose he rejected the soft white hand she extended to him; yet, as he tenderly pressed it in his own, "Are you sure," said he, "your father will receive me?"

"Very sure—I have seen you, that is sufficient; besides he loves every body who is unfortunate, because he has been unfortunate himself; so come along."

William, according to the system in which he had been but too well instructed on the first view of Marienna in boy's clothes, put himself very much upon his guard; but what became of his suspicious caution when she called herself a girl when his eyes informed him she was the most beautiful, and his ears convinced him she was also the most candid, the most innocent of her sex; if idolatry had been no crime, he would have paid her divine homage.

Marienna

Marienna's features were not only beautiful, but the soul of beauty they were composed in, the sparkling expression of sensibility, and those lips, which had never yielded but to the touch of a father's, seemingly divided to utter the pure dictates of unadulterated nature; conceived in innocence, and delivered in the language of modesty.—A thousand times did William, as he stood gazing on her, repeat to himself—"How charming she is—what teeth—what eyes—what hair!" William was in the right of it not to pass over her hair, it was of a light ash colour, and the finest in the world, except his own; with its natural ringlets it formed a covering for her elegant shoulders, and flowed negligently to the termination of her slender waist; her dress, though intended to be masculine, had preserved enough of the feminine to render it extremely soft and becoming, the vest being open at the collar, and her lovely bosom only concealed by many folds of fine muslin that, by reflection, added to the snowy whiteness of her skin.

William would never have tired in gazing, or Marienna in listening to the ecstasies of William; again she invited him, with a natural and affectionate air, to go with her; she passed one of her arms through his, would have dragged him towards Germain, but Germain approached them with no very flattering aspect, having observed the motions of these young people from the beginning of the conversation.

Marienna felt confused, she did not know why, when this old and favourite servant of her father asked William from whence he came—whither he was going—and what he wanted with the young person to whom he had been talking so long?

“Long,” replied William; “do you call it long, Monsieur? I have not seen her more than a minute!”

“Her—so she has told you then that she is a girl.”—“Ah! Marienna, Marienna, what will your father say to this?”

“Why what have I done, Germain? I have not my father and you told me, a hundred

hundred times, that I shall always tell the truth, and never fear to speak what I think? besides, my dear good Germain, you cannot think how kind, how virtuous, how innocent, and, alas! how unhappy he is; I am sure he did not know that I heard him, when he talked, and wept, and wrung his hands!—Oh, my God! how my heart felt for him; but we shall take him to my father, and he, and you, and I, will all try to comfort him.”

“Young man, who are you?” asked the old servant, sternly.

“I am nobody—I am nothing—I have no quality to distinguish me, except that I have the misfortune to be a man.”

“Ah! how moving are his expressions,” cried Marienna.

“Of what country?” asked Germain.

“I know only that I am a citizen of the world.”

“What is the name of your father?”

“Of that too I am ignorant.”

“Are you acquainted with his rank?”

“No.”

"Is this possible that he, who has a father, should neither know his name, place of abode, nor his situation in the rank of society?"

"Am I to blame if he has concealed all these things from me?—am I to suffer in the opinion of others, because, without being guilty of any crime, he has abandoned and forsaken me?"—Marienna touched his arm, "You should not say that," whispered she. But his soul was too noble to admit of a subterfuge, even at the instigation of her who had taught him his first lesson in the delicious language of love; he therefore continued his discourse, still addressing himself to the old man, who seemed rather the guardian than the servant of his innocent little mistress.—"Think not, Sir, I beseech you, that I am either an impostor, or mad; but listen to me, whilst I tell you all that I know of my wretched destiny!—I have been educated in a college at Paris; I have seen there a man, who I believe of no mean condition; he supported me in a stile of grandeur; he
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called me his son—I loved him tenderly—I verily thought him to be my father—he has this day, without any fault of mine, cast me from his arms, renounced, and abandoned me; I am henceforth a wanderer; and, if you reject me, I will form no other intercourse with mankind.”

“Imprudent Marienna,” said the old man, “I hope you have not promised him the protection of your father?”—In these few words William felt his hopes all blasted, and fled from them with precipitation, casting a look of anguish on Marienna that rooted itself in her heart for ever.—“Cruel, cruel Germain,” cried she, “you have driven him from us—see how he flies.”—“Oh! poor Monsieur—poor, poor, unfortunate, amiable youth, I shall love you as long as I live, and I never, never will forget you.”—“May heaven forgive *you*, Germain, but *I* never shall.”

William, with his head running on the insult he fancied he had received from Germain, and his heart filled by the image of Marienna, wandered about all night, without

without knowing what path he had taken; nor did the dawn of a bright morning afford him the least relief; he was still on the large plain, but in what part of it was to him a matter of indifference; he still continued walking, or rather flying, like the timid hare before the hunter, fearful to make one step, even to recover its panting breath, lest the terrible hounds should overtake it. William had no pursuers; his greatest enemies he carried in his bosom; they spoke to him only of the cruelty, the perfidy of man; of the lost, the lovely Marienna; and of his own irreparable woes! By and by his ears are assaulted with distant cries—they approach nearer to him—he distinctly hears these words:—"Father, Germain—dear stranger—will none of you come to save the poor Marienna?" William sprang forward; what a scene presented itself—it was the beautiful Marienna, covered with blood, in the hands of a robber, who strove to drag her along.—"Ruffian," exclaimed our hero, snatching her from his side, without considering the danger

danger to which he exposed himself, "is it thus that thou usest a defenceless woman?" The villain drew out a pistol, and would have answered him with the contents, but our hero tore it from his trembling grasp, levelled it at his head, and laid him dead at his feet. The young people, no doubt, would have said a thousand tender things to each other, if humanity had not superseded love—deep, heavy groans issued from no distant spot—Marienna cried out, "You have saved me, let us fly to save the good Germain—Ah! ah! Germain will die; they have wounded him to death!" They were at the old man's side in a moment, who laid, stretched on the ground, bleeding, and in agonies!

Marienna threw herself down by him, her arms entwined his neck—"Oh! my dear Germain," cried she, "you must not die—here I am—open your eyes, behold I am safe—indeed I am—but see who has saved me? see who it is that is binding up your poor wounds?—Oh, my God! you will love him now—yes, you will carry him

him with us to my father.—If you do but get well, my good Germain, I know I shall never be sorry for this terrible accident.”

“Blessed be the bounty of God!” cried Germain.

“Ah! but Germain, what do you say to our defender?”

“Next to God I will love and serve him. Generous, amiable youth,” he continued, “agent of heaven; it is thou then—thou, who savest a father from distraction—savest me from death—savest this darling child from dishonour—I die, if thou dost not pardon my late inhumanity.”

“Live, venerable man,” replied William, “and let us reap the fruit of my services, your friendship, as I shall prove myself deserving of it.”

“I promise to be your friend, without restrictions; who shall ever presume to doubt thy noble spirit?—Give me thy hand?—my soul has been more wounded than my body, in restoring to me my
young

young mistress inviolate; you have cured the one, the other is but a contusion on my shoulder; bind it up tight with your handkerchiefs, and it will find its own remedy in the blood it has emitted; then set me upon the horse, and I am yet strong enough to conduct you to the arms of a virtuous father, who will acknowledge in you the deliverer of his precious daughter, and love you, as I do, for her sake."

The two young people, delighted with their office, did every thing he commanded; and having, with some difficulty, put him on horseback, Marienna mounted behind to keep him steady.

William, as he walked by their side, felt himself no longer unhappy—he could see Marienna—he could catch her smiling glances as she threw them bashfully towards him—he could hear the sound of her musical voice; in short, he could adore her without fear of offending any body—she accounted to him for the extraordinary scene in which he found them engaged, by saying, "that, after he had ran away from them,

them, they had lost their road, no doubt," she added, "for a punishment that they had not taken him with them: in this disagreeable dilemma they had wandered about all night, when just as they were beginning to distinguish, at break of day, that they were not far from Romans, the villain assaulted them; when Germain, in hopes to move his compassion, told him Marienna was a girl, begging he would turn away the pistols from her sight; upon which he felt himself wounded by the discharge of one of them; and, at the same moment that he fell, he had the torture to behold Marienna drawn from his side, and dragged from his sight!"

Stopping at the pretty village of Marcellin, our three travellers rested long enough to get Germain's wounds dressed by a surgeon; afterwards they proceeded, with additional spirit, for the house of Marienna's father, whose name was Villeroy.

CHAP.

CHAP. XV.

THE FOREST—THE FORTRESS—AND THE
FATHER.

WHEN they entered the gloomy forest of *Chamboran* William's heart began to fail him a little—to part *now* with Marienna, oh! the thought was insupportable—and how did he know but her father might give him as cold a reception as Germain had done before in the plain of Romans—the bear possibility of such a misfortune drew so deep a sigh from the bottom of his heart as made Marienna seek for its origin, and finding it in his timidity, she got Germain of her party, both together using such cordial expressions as gave him new courage.

This

This forest, where stood the habitation of Villeroy, was situated between St. Marcellin, St. Etienne, and Romans, being full ten leagues in circumference, more celebrated for robbers, and precipices, than for the few charms Nature had bestowed upon its decorations—to all the world it was an object of so much terror, that it was supposed whoever entered it must be endowed with celestial courage—nothing, in fact, could be equally tremendous. William thought so as he cast up his sight upon the huge trees, that bending with age threatened to fall and crush those who should be under them; when he saw that the radiance of the sun could not penetrate through their massy boughs, and heard the unceasing murmurs, or rather growling of the winds, which eternally collected and discharged themselves amongst their branches.

In the midst of this terrific scene of horrors was situated the house of Villeroy, but in a little glen or valley much more favourable, which, however, was not perceived

ceived by William till they came close upon it—this house seemed to represent a sort of fortress—Marienna smiled to see William's astonishment.

“There,” said she, “there is our charming habitation—and there too is my dear, dear father walking on the wall—ah! he is looking out for his poor Marienna I dare say, and little thinks who I am bringing with me.”

Marienna was perfectly right—Villeroy, alarmed at their absence, had not been in bed the whole night, and watched from the first dawn of morning, pacing up and down in hopes he should see them returning—he saw them stop at the drawbridge, for the house was surrounded by a moat filled with water—he uttered a cry of joy—he was infirm, yet he forgot his infirmities—he forgot his age—he even forgot his cane, and walked briskly to let down the drawbridge, being so constructed that he could do it with his single arm.

How charming, how venerable was the figure of this interesting old recluse—how beautiful

beautiful the contrast, when the young, the lovely, the enchanting Marienna rushed to his arms, when he pressed her so close to his bosom, that his silver hairs almost covered her rose-woven countenance.—Alas! poor William, we yet see thee only in the back-ground of this delicious picture—this cannot long be thy situation—is not thy divine mistress telling her father, as fast as she can speak, and faster than she ever spoke before, that it is to thee he is indebted for the life of his beloved daughter, and hardly less beloved servant—is not the grateful Germain himself loading thee with applauses. Step forward then that we might place thee on our canvass in a light more to the advantages of thy heroism, and of thy virtues.

The moment Villeroy was informed that the deliverer of his daughter stood before him, he broke from her embraces—he dropped the hand of Germain, and catching William in his arms, who stood trembling, his eyes cast upon the ground—“Child of misfortune,” cried he, “you have

have acquired rights to my heart, which none shall ever dispute with thee—are you willing to adopt my retirement—to quit mankind, who are all wicked—all deceitful—to live with, to love, and never to leave me, except——”

Here William interrupted him; “Never, never, my father, except you command me to depart from you.—Ah! will you be my father? will you let me be the brother of your Marienna?”

“Father!” cried Villeroy, starting, “ah! how that appellation from thy lips penetrates my very soul—but for me—let us say no more about it—come again to my arms—be to me as the son those eyes have seen expire—and be the brother of Marienna: but remember the gate through which you are permitted to pass is shut against all the world but yourself; therefore, if solitude does not please you, turn back before it be too late.”

William respectfully imprinted his assent on the hand of Villeroy, and they all entered the house together.

Whilst

Whilst William is telling his pathetic tale to an audience of three, who are listening to him with much interest, let us take a peep round the strange building to which the good or evil fortune of our young hero had conducted him.

We shall find it a small house, fortified against all surprises by a high wall, flat at the top, which nearly concealed every part of it, till we have passed over the draw-bridge; the edifice consists of only one roomy story, erected in four parts, each containing two apartments, where there is no display either of architecture, or ornaments of any sort; in lieu of which we see every thing that can be useful and commodious arranged in the neatest manner—when we say there are no ornaments, we should except a very fine harpsichord, standing in a small dressing room, which Marienna calls her own; how she attained the use of it will be made known hereafter: it was extremely instrumental to the amusement of her leisure hours—it also soothed those of gloomy regret, to which the days
of

of her father were but too much dedicated. In the court of this odd dwelling is a stable for their horse—a granary for their corn—a shed for tools of every kind—and still within the walls springs of clear water, besides a good kitchen garden, well replenished with fruits and vegetables; nor is there wanting a yard for poultry—this little secluded family having every recourse, every necessary, every comfort within themselves.

It is time now that we return back into the house, because William has just finished the sad relation of his woes—we see him embraced by Villeroy, Marienna, and Germain—we see them contending which shall pour upon his wounded sensibility the sweetest balm of consolation—we hear him gratefully acknowledge that he shall owe all his yet untasted happiness to their friendship—alas! mistaken youth! thou art not yet doomed to be happy—thy too susceptible apprehensions must follow thee every where—shake off the errors of prejudice—learn to know that happiness will not mate
with

with suspicion—teach thyself to believe that though some men are false, cruel, and deceitful, there are a much larger proportion of the human race whose hearts are upright, feeling, and generous.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.